

ILLUSTRATED POEMS
OF
OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES





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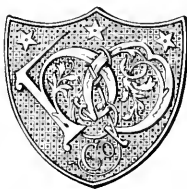
ILLUSTRATED POEMS

OF

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
AVE	ix
OLD IRONSIDES	1
THE LAST LEAF	2
THE PILGRIM'S VISION	4
MY AVIARY	10
ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL	15
THE PLOUGHMAN	19
A MOTHER'S SECRET	22
THE VOICELESS	26
THE TWO STREAMS	27
BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE	28
THE FLOWER OF LIBERTY	30
THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS	31
SUN AND SHADOW	33
UNDER THE VIOLETS	34
HYMN OF TRUST	36
DOROTHY Q	37
THE ORGAN-BLOWER	40
A BALLAD OF THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY	43
LEXINGTON	48
GRANDMOTHER'S STORY OF BUNKER-HILL BATTLE	51
BILL AND JOE	62
CONTENTMENT	64
THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE; OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY"	68
DE SAUTY	73
THE FIRST FAN	76
NEARING THE SNOW LINE	82
THE SILENT MELODY	83
THE IRON GATE	86

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	ARTIST.	PAGE.
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> PORTRAIT, etching </div> <div> S. A. SCHOFF </div> <div> <i>Frontispiece</i> </div> </div>		viii
AVE.		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Head piece</div> <div>S. L. SMITH.</div> <div>ix</div> </div>		ix
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Tail piece</div> <div>S. L. SMITH.</div> <div>x</div> </div>		x
OLD IRONSIDES.		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Head piece</div> <div>W. F. HALSALL</div> <div>1</div> </div>		1
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"And give her to the god of storms,</i> <i>The lightning and the gale!"</i> </div>		
	W. F. HALSALL	1
THE LAST LEAF.		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Head piece, The Old State House</div> <div>HELEN M. HINDS</div> <div>2</div> </div>		2
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"The last leaf upon the tree</i> <i>In the spring"</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	3
THE PILGRIM'S VISION.		
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Head piece</div> <div>S. L. SMITH</div> <div>4</div> </div>		4
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"Their Leader rode before them,</i> <i>Of bearing calm and high"</i> </div>		
	GEORGE R. BARSE	6
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"With side to side, and spar to spar,</i> <i>Whose smoking decks are these?"</i> </div>		
	W. F. HALSALL	7
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div>Tail piece. Anemone</div> <div>FREDERIC CROWNSHIELD</div> <div>9</div> </div>		9
MY AVIARY.		
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"I see the solemn gulls in council sitting</i> <i>On some broad ice-floe, pondering long and</i> <i>late".</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	10
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"The duck, round-breasted as a rustic maiden,</i> <i>Paddles and plunges, busy, busy, still"</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	10
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"Through my north window, in the wintry weather"</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	12
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"My airy oriel on the river shore"</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	13
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"In fact with nothing bird-like but my quill"</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	14
ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL.		
Head piece.		
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"This ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good</i> <i>old times"</i> </div>		
	LOUIS RITTER	15
<div style="padding-left: 40px;"> <i>"With those that in the Mayflower came, — a hun-</i> <i>dred souls and more"</i> </div>		
	W. F. HALSALL	16

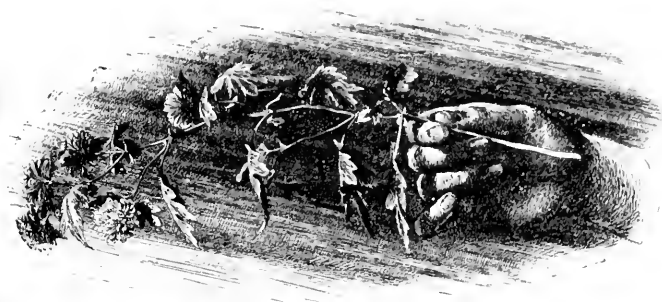
	ARTIST.	PAGE
"When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled it to the brim"	F. P. VINTON	17
"So John did drink — and well he worked that night at Bunker's Hill!"	T. DE THULSTRUP	18
THE PLOUGHMAN.		
"First in the field before the reddening sun" . . .	J. F. MURPHY	19
"Last in the shadows when the day is done" . . .	J. F. MURPHY	19
"By yon twin summits, on whose splintery crests The tossing hemlocks hold the eagles' nests" . . .	FREDERIC CROWNINSHIELD	21
A MOTHER'S SECRET.		
"And Mary culled the flaxen fibres while; Till eve she spun; she spun till morning light" .	MRS. F. C. HOUSTON	22
THE VOICELESS.		
"We count the broken lyres that rest Where the sweet wailing singers slumber" . . .	FREDERIC CROWNINSHIELD	26
THE TWO STREAMS.		
"Behold the rocky wall That down its sloping sides"	H. BOLTON JONES	27
BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE.		
Head piece. The Pine and the Palmetto . . .	FREDERIC CROWNINSHIELD	28
"She has gone, — she has left us in passion and pride"	W. F. HALSALL	29
THE FLOWER OF LIBERTY.		
Head piece. "The starry Flower of Liberty"	W. L. TAYLOR	30
THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.		
Tail piece	S. L. SMITH	32
SUN AND SHADOW.		
Head piece	W. F. HALSALL	33
UNDER THE VIOLETS.		
Head piece	S. L. SMITH	34
"A slender cross of wood alone"	G. H. MAYNARD	35
HYMN OF TRUST.		
Head piece	FREDERIC CROWNINSHIELD	36
DOROTHY O.		
Head piece. Engraved from the original portrait		37
Tail piece		39
THE ORGAN-BLOWER.		
The Organ at King's Chapel, Boston	C. S. MILLS	40
Tail piece	HELEN M. HINDS	42

	ARTIST.	PAGE.
A BALLAD OF THE BOSTON TEA PARTY.		
Head piece	C. J. TAYLOR	43
The tea ships at the wharf	W. F. HALSALL	44
" <i>A tribe of Red men, axe in hand</i> "	GEORGE R. BARSE	45
Tail piece	S. L. SMITH	47
LEXINGTON.		
Head piece. An Incident	HOWARD PYLE	48
The Embarkation	HOWARD PYLE	49
" <i>Blazing and clanging from thicket and wall</i> "	HOWARD PYLE	50
GRANDMOTHER'S STORY OF BUNKER HILL BATTLE.		
The British troops forming their line	W. H. SHELTON	51
" <i>In the bush of expectation, in the awe and trepidation</i> "	F. C. JONES	53
" <i>How they surged above the breastwork as a sea breaks over a deck</i> "	W. H. SHELTON	58
" <i>How, driven, yet scarce defeated, our worn-out men retreated</i> "	W. H. SHELTON	59
" <i>For they all thought he was dying, as they gathered round him crying</i> "	HOWARD PYLE	60
Tail piece. On the Ramparts at Daybreak	C. S. MILLS	61
BILL AND JOE.		
" <i>Come, dear old comrade, you and I Will steal an hour from day: gone by</i> "	W. T. SMEDLEY	62
CONTENTMENT.		
" <i>And close at hand is such a one, In yonder street that fronts the sun</i> "	ROSS TURNER	65
" <i>Perhaps, for just a single spurt, Some seconds less would do no hurt</i> "	W. H. SHELTON	66
Tail piece	LOUIS RITTER	67
THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE.		
Head piece. From an authentic drawing	W. H. SHELTON	68
" <i>So the Deacon inquired of the village folk</i> "	W. T. SMEDLEY	70
" <i>The bubs of logs from the 'Settler's ellum'</i> "	W. T. SMEDLEY	71
" <i>Then something decidedly like a spill</i> "	W. T. SMEDLEY	72
DE SAUTY.		
" <i>Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us</i> "	W. T. SMEDLEY	73
" <i>Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker</i> "	W. T. SMEDLEY	75
THE FIRST FAN.		
Head piece	S. L. SMITH	76
" <i>Poor Venus! What had she to sell?</i> "	MRS. F. C. HOUSTON	78
Tail piece	MRS. F. C. HOUSTON	81

	ARTIST.	PAGE
NEARING THE SNOW LINE.		
<i>" Slow toiling upward from the misty vale "</i> . . .	W. T. SMEDLEY . . .	82
THE SILENT MELODY.		
Head piece	S. L. SMITH	83
<i>" And so the broken harp they bring "</i>	I. H. STIEFEL	84
Tail piece	S. L. SMITH	85
THE IRON GATE.		
Head piece	W. L. TAYLOR	86
FINIS	S. L. SMITH	89

The Illustrations were engraved by Messrs. ANDREW, ATTWOOD, BAKER, CLOSSON, COWEE, FRENCH, HELD, MARSH, LATHAM, SCHOELCH, SYLVESTER, MISS POWELL, and others.





AVE.

*Full well I know the frozen hand has come
That smites the songs of grove and garden dumb,
And chills sad autumn's last chrysanthemum;*

*Yet would I find one blossom, if I might,
Ere the dark loom that weaves the robe of white
Hides all the wrecks of summer out of sight.*

*Sometimes in dim November's narrowing day,
When all the season's pride has passed away,
As mid the blackened stems and leaves we stray,*

*We spy in sheltered nook or rocky cleft
A starry disk the hurrying winds have left,
Of all its blooming sisterhood bereft:*

*Some pansy, with its wondering baby eyes,—
Poor wayside nursling! —fixed in blank surprise
At the rough welcome of unfriendly skies;*

*Or golden daisy, —will it dare disclaim
The lion's tooth, to wear this gentler name?
Or blood-red salvia, with its lips aflame:*

*The storms have stripped the lily and the rose,
Still on its cheek the blush of summer glows,
And all its heart-leaves kindle as it blows.*

AVE.

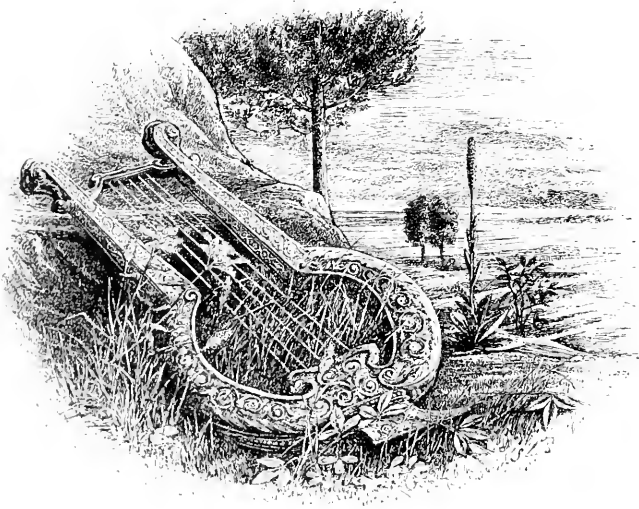
*So had I looked some bond of song to find
The careless winds of autumn left behind,
With these of earlier seasons' growth to bind.*

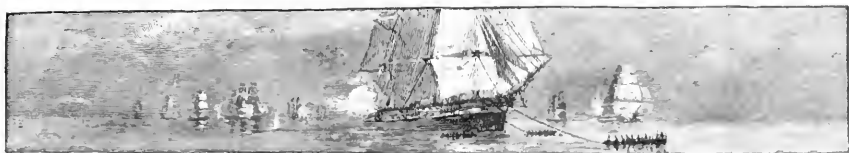
*Ah me! my skies are dark with sudden grief,
A flower lies faded on my garnered sheaf;
Yet let the sunshine gild this virgin leaf, —*

*The joyous, blessed sunshine of the past,
Still with me, though the heavens are overcast, —
The light that shines while life and memory last.*

*Go, pictured rhymes, for loving readers meant;
Bring back the smiles your jocund morning lent,
And warm their hearts with sunbeams yet unspent!*

Beverly Farms, July 24, 1884.



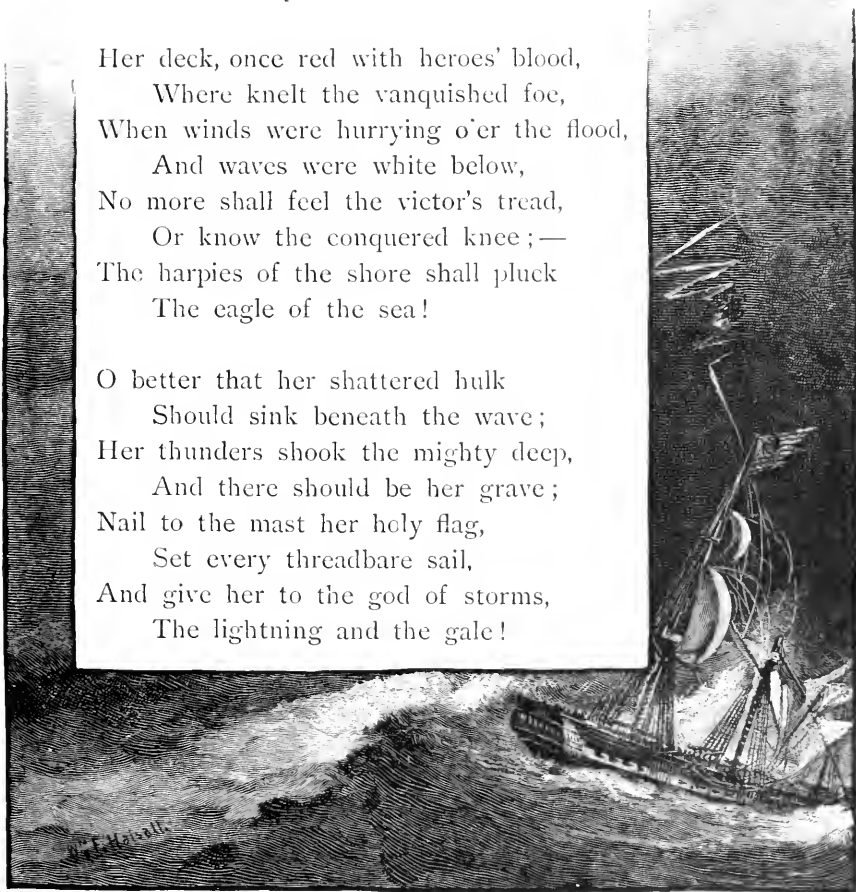


OLD IRONSIDES.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!
 Long has it waved on high,
 And many an eye has danced to see
 That banner in the sky;
 Beneath it rung the battle shout,
 And burst the cannon's roar; —
 The meteor of the ocean air
 Shall sweep the clouds no more!

Her deck, once red with heroes' blood,
 Where knelt the vanquished foe,
 When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,
 And waves were white below,
 No more shall feel the victor's tread,
 Or know the conquered knee; —
 The harpies of the shore shall pluck
 The eagle of the sea!

O better that her shattered hulk
 Should sink beneath the wave;
 Her thunders shook the mighty deep,
 And there should be her grave;
 Nail to the mast her holy flag,
 Set every threadbare sail,
 And give her to the god of storms,
 The lightning and the gale!





THE LAST LEAF.

I saw him once before,
As he passed by the door,
 And again
The pavement stones resound,
As he totters o'er the ground
 With his cane.

They say that in his prime,
Ere the pruning-knife of Time
 Cut him down,
Not a better man was found
By the Crier on his round
 Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,
And he looks at all he meets
 Sad and wan,
And he shakes his feeble head,
That it seems as if he said,
 " They are gone."

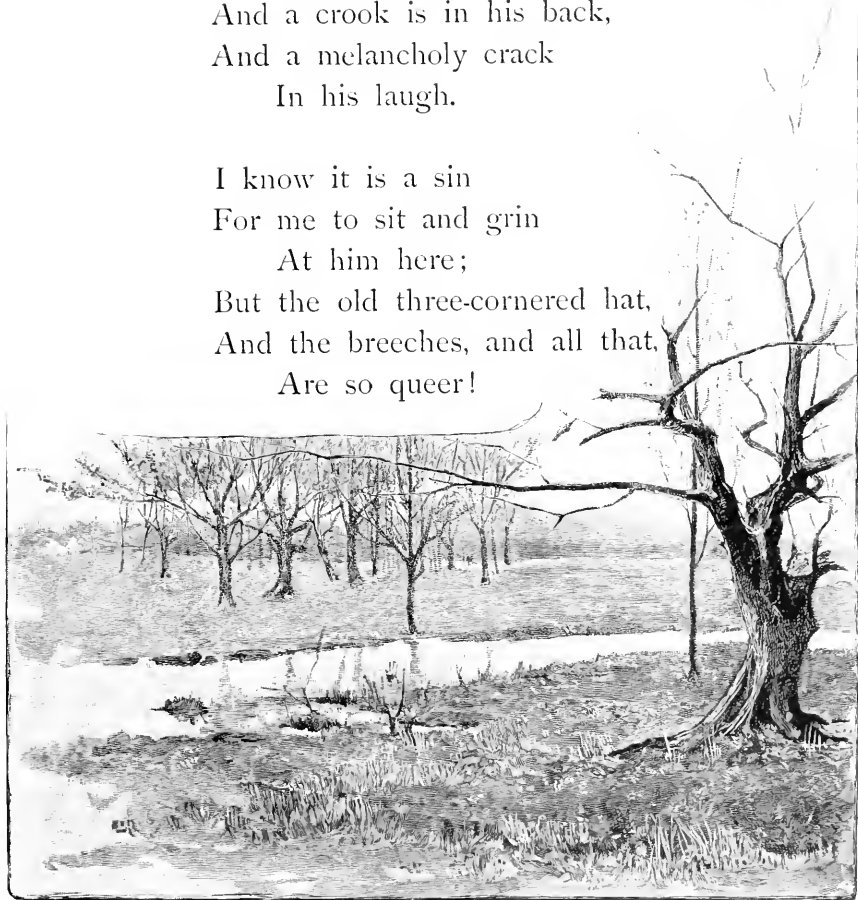
The mossy marbles rest
On the lips that he has prest
 In their bloom,
And the names he loved to hear

Have been carved for many a year
On the tomb.

My grandmamma has said —
Poor old lady, she is dead
Long ago —
That he had a Roman nose,
And his cheek was like a rose
In the snow.

But now his nose is thin,
And it rests upon his chin
Like a staff,
And a crook is in his back,
And a melancholy crack
In his laugh.

I know it is a sin
For me to sit and grin
At him here;
But the old three-cornered hat,
And the breeches, and all that,
Are so queer!



THE PILGRIM'S VISION.

And if I should live to be
The last leaf upon the tree
In the spring,
Let them smile, as I do now,
At the old forsaken bough
Where I cling.

*THE PILGRIM'S VISION.*

In the hour of twilight shadows
The Pilgrim sire looked out;
He thought of the "bloody Salvages"
That lurked all round about,
Of Wituwamet's pictured knife
And Pecksuot's whooping shout;
For the baby's limbs were feeble,
Though his father's arms were stout.

His home was a freezing cabin,
Too bare for the hungry rat,
Its roof was thatched with ragged grass,
And bald enough of that;

The hole that served for casement
Was glazed with an ancient hat;
And the ice was gently thawing
From the log whereon he sat.

Along the dreary landscape
His eyes went to and fro,
The trees all clad in icicles,
The streams that did not flow;
A sudden thought flashed o'er him, —
A dream of long ago, —
He smote his leathern jerkin,
And murmured, "Even so!"

"Come hither, God-be-Glorified,
And sit upon my knee,
Behold the dream unfolding,
Whereof I spake to thee
By the winter's hearth in Leyden
And on the stormy sea;
True is the dream's beginning, —
So may its ending be!

"I saw in the naked forest
Our scattered remnant cast,
A screen of shivering branches
Between them and the blast;
The snow was falling round them,
The dying fell as fast;
I looked to see them perish,
When lo, the vision passed.

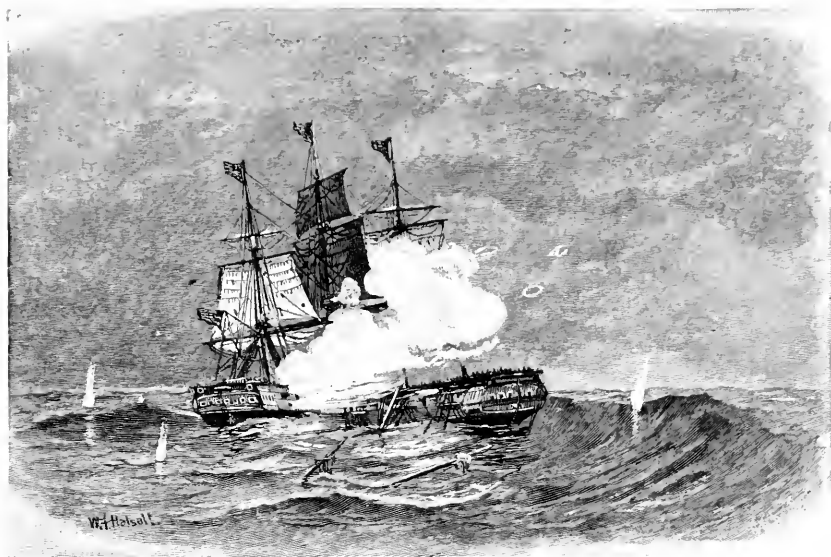
"Again mine eyes were opened; —
The feeble had waxed strong,



The babes had grown to sturdy men,
 The remnant was a throng;
 By shadowed lake and winding stream,
 And all the shores along,
 The howling demons quaked to hear
 The Christian's godly song.

“ They slept, — the village fathers, —
 By river, lake, and shore,
 When far adown the steep of Time
 The vision rose once more ;
 I saw along the winter snow
 A spectral column pour,
 And high above their broken ranks
 A tattered flag they bore.

“ Their Leader rode before them,
 Of bearing calm and high,
 The light of Heaven's own kindling
 Throned in his awful eye ;
 These were a Nation's champions
 Her dread appeal to try ;



God for the right! I faltered,
And lo, the train passed by.

“Once more;—the strife is ended,
The solemn issue tried,
The Lord of Hosts, his mighty arm
Has helped our Israel's side;
Gray stone and grassy hillock
Tell where our martyrs died,
But peaceful smiles the harvest,
And stainless flows the tide.

“A crash,—as when some swollen cloud
Cracks o'er the tangled trees!
With side to side, and spar to spar,
Whose smoking decks are these?
I know St. George's blood-red cross,
Thou Mistress of the Seas,—
But what is she, whose streaming bars
Roll out before the breeze?

“ Ah, well her iron ribs are knit,
Whose thunders strive to quell
The bellowing throats, the blazing lips,
That pealed the Armada's knell!
The mist was cleared, — a wreath of stars
Rose o'er the crimsoned swell,
And, wavering from its haughty peak,
The cross of England fell!

“ O trembling faith! though dark the morn,
A heavenly torch is thine;
While feebler races melt away,
And paler orbs decline,
Still shall the fiery pillar's ray,
Along thy pathway shine,
To light the chosen tribe that sought
This Western Palestine!

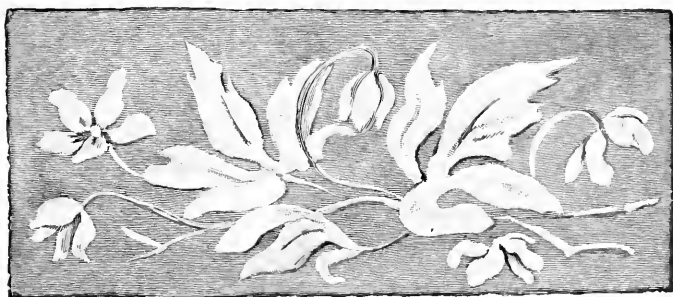
“ I see the living tide roll on;
It crowns with flaming towers
The icy capes of Labrador,
The Spaniard's 'land of flowers'!
It streams beyond the splintered ridge
That parts the Northern showers;
From eastern rock to sunset wave
The Continent is ours!”

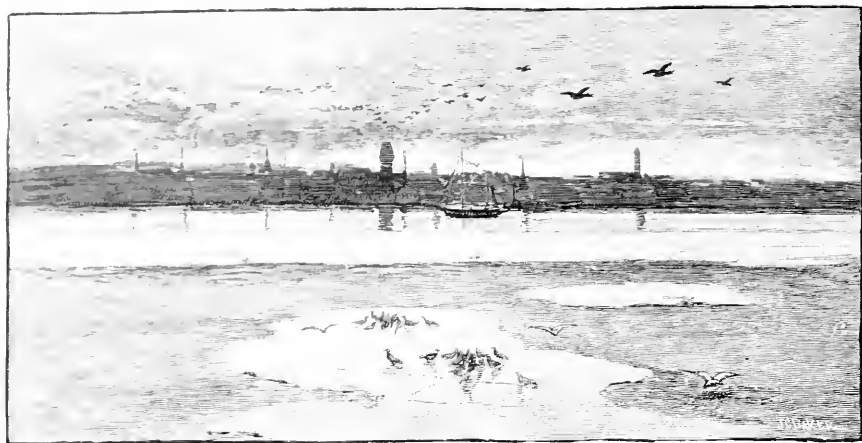
He ceased, — the grim old soldier-saint, —
Then softly bent to cheer
The pilgrim-child, whose wasting face
Was meekly turned to hear;
And drew his toil-worn sleeve across,
To brush the manly tear
From cheeks that never changed in woe,
And never blanched in fear.

The weary pilgrim slumbers,
His resting-place unknown;
His hands were crossed, his lids were closed,
The dust was o'er him strown;
The drifting soil, the mouldering leaf,
Along the sod were blown;
His mound has melted into earth,
His memory lives alone.

So let it live unfading,
The memory of the dead,
Long as the pale anemone
Springs where their tears were shed,
Or, raining in the summer's wind
In flakes of burning red,
The wild rose sprinkles with its leaves
The turf where once they bled!

Yea, when the frowning bulwarks
That guard this holy strand
Have sunk beneath the trampling surge
In beds of sparkling sand,
While in the waste of ocean
One hoary rock shall stand,
Be this its latest legend, —
HERE WAS THE PILGRIM'S LAND!



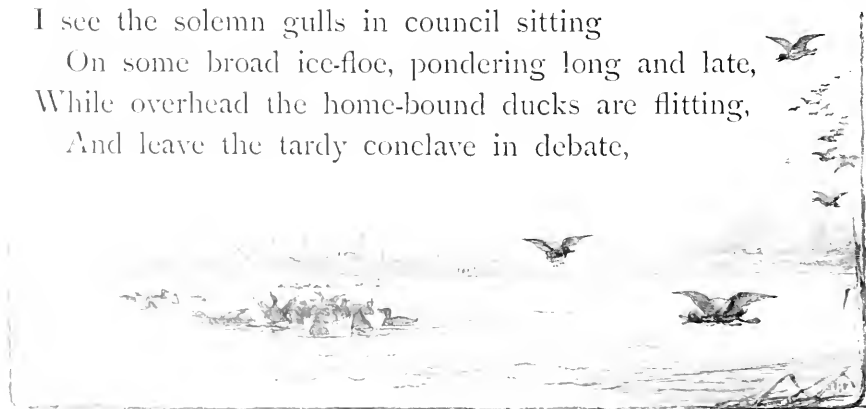


MY AVIARY.

THROUGH my north window, in the wintry weather,—
 My airy oriel on the river shore,—
 I watch the sea-fowl as they flock together
 Where late the boatman flashed his dripping oar.

The gull, high floating, like a sloop unladen,
 Lets the loose water waft him as it will;
 The duck, round-breasted as a rustic maiden,
 Paddles and plunges, busy, busy still.

I see the solemn gulls in council sitting
 On some broad ice-floe, pondering long and late,
 While overhead the home-bound ducks are flitting,
 And leave the tardy conclave in debate,



Those weighty questions in their breasts revolving
 Whose deeper meaning science never learns,
 Till at some reverend elder's look dissolving,
 The speechless senate silently adjourns.

But when along the waves the shrill north-easter
 Shrieks through the laboring coaster's shrouds "Beware!"
 The pale bird, kindling like a Christmas feaster
 When some wild chorus shakes the vinous air,

Flaps from the leaden wave in fierce rejoicing,
 Feels heaven's dumb lightning thrill his torpid nerves,
 Now on the blast his whistling plumage poisoning,
 Now wheeling, whirling in fantastic curves.

Such is our gull; a gentleman of leisure,
 Less fleshed than feathered; bagged you 'll find him such;
 His virtue silence; his employment pleasure;
 Not bad to look at, and not good for much.

What of our duck? He has some high-bred cousins,—
 His Grace the Canvas-back, My Lord the Brant,—
Anas and *Anser*,—both served up by dozens,
 At Boston's *Rocher*, half-way to Nahant.

As for himself, he seems alert and thriving,—
 Grubs up a living somehow—what, who knows?
 Crabs? mussels? weeds?—Look quick! there's one just diving!
 Flop! Splash! his white breast glistens—down he goes!

And while he's under—just about a minute—
 I take advantage of the fact to say
 His fishy carcase has no virtue in it
 The gunning idiot's worthless hire to pay.



He knows you! "sportsmen" from suburban alleys,
 Stretched under seaweed in the treacherous punt;
 Knows every lazy, shiftless lout that sallies
 Forth to waste powder — as *he* says, to "hunt."

I watch you with a patient satisfaction,
 Well pleased to discount your predestined luck;
 The float that figures in your sly transaction
 Will carry back a goose, but not a duck.

Shrewd is our bird; not easy to outwit him!
 Sharp is the outlook of those pin-head eyes;
 Still, he is mortal and a shot may hit him,
 One cannot always miss him if he tries.

Look! there's a young one, dreaming not of danger;
 Sees a flat log come floating down the stream;
 Stares undismayed upon the harmless stranger;
 Ah! were all strangers harmless as they seem!

Habet! a leaden shower his breast has shattered;
 Vainly he flutters, not again to rise;
 His soft white plumes along the waves are scattered;
 Helpless the wing that braved the tempest lies.

He sees his comrades high above him flying
 To seek their nests among the island reeds;

Strong is their flight; all lonely he is lying
Washed by the crimsoned water as he bleeds.

O Thou who carest for the falling sparrow,
Canst Thou the sinless sufferer's pang forget?
Or is Thy dread account-book's page so narrow
Its one long column scores Thy creatures' debt?

Poor gentle guest, by nature kindly cherished,
A world grows dark with thee in blinding death;
One little gasp — thy universe has perished,
Wrecked by the idle thief who stole thy breath!

Is this the whole sad story of creation,
Lived by its breathing myriads o'er and o'er, —
One glimpse of day, then black annihilation, —
A sunlit passage to a sunless shore?

Give back our faith, ye mystery-solving lynxes!
Robe us once more in heaven-aspiring creeds!
Happier was dreaming Egypt with her sphynxes
The stony convent with its cross and beads!

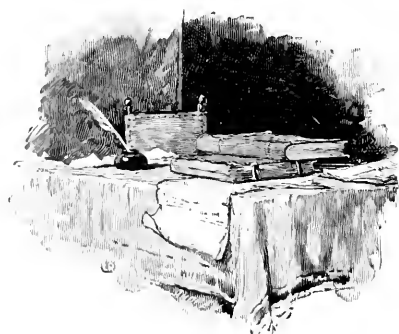


How often gazing where a bird reposes,
 Rocked on the wavelets, drifting with the tide,
I lose myself in strange metempsychosis
 And float a sea-fowl at a sea-fowl's side.

From rain, hail, snow in feathery mantle muffled,
 Clear-eyed, strong-limbed, with keenest sense to hear
My mate soft murmuring, who, with plumes unruffled,
 Where'er I wander still is nestling near;

The great blue hollow like a garment o'er me;
 Space all unmeasured, unrecorded time;
While seen with inward eye moves on before me
 Thought's pictured train in wordless pantomime.

—A voice recalls me. — From my window turning
 I find myself a plumeless biped still;
No beak, no claws, no sign of wings discerning, —
 In fact with nothing bird-like but my quill.





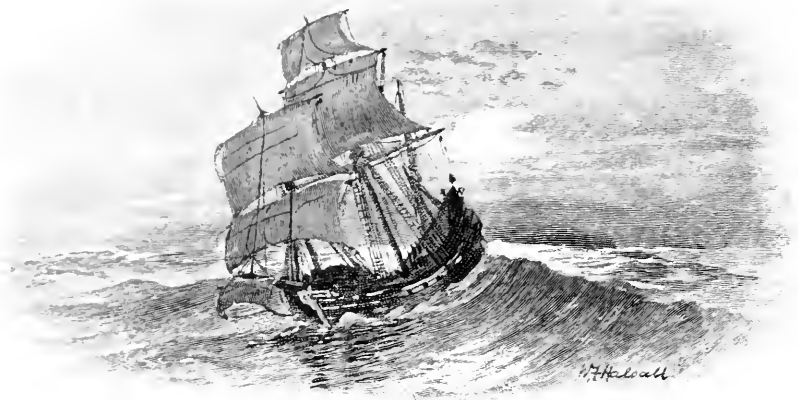
ON LENDING A PUNCH-BOWL.

THIS ancient silver bowl of mine, it tells of good old times,
 Of joyous days, and jolly nights, and merry Christmas chimes ;
 They were a free and jovial race, but honest, brave, and true,
 That dipped their ladle in the punch when this old bowl was
 new.

A Spanish galleon brought the bar ; so runs the ancient tale ;
 'T was hammered by an Antwerp smith, whose arm was like
 a flail ;
 And now and then between the strokes, for fear his strength
 should fail,
 He wiped his brow, and quaffed a cup of good old Flemish
 ale.

'T was purchased by an English squire to please his loving
 dame,
 Who saw the cherubs, and conceived a longing for the same ;
 And oft as on the ancient stock another twig was found,
 'T was filled with caudle spiced and hot, and handed smok-
 ing round.

But, changing hands, it reached at length a Puritan divine,
 Who used to follow Timothy, and take a little wine,
 But hated punch and prelacy ; and so it was, perhaps,
 He went to Leyden, where he found conventicles and schnaps.



And then, of course, you know what 's next, — it left the Dutch-
man's shore

With those that in the Mayflower came, — a hundred souls
and more, —

Along with all the furniture, to fill their new abodes, —
To judge by what is still on hand, at least a hundred loads.

'T was on a dreary winter's eve, the night was closing dim,
When brave Miles Standish took the bowl, and filled it to
the brim ;

The little Captain stood and stirred the posset with his sword,
And all his sturdy men-at-arms were ranged about the board.

He poured the fiery Hollands in, — the man that never
feared, —

He took a long and solemn draught, and wiped his yellow
beard ;

And one by one the musketeers — the men that fought and
prayed —

All drank as 'twere their mother's milk, and not a man afraid.

That night, affrighted from his nest, the screaming eagle flew,
He heard the Pequot's ringing whoop, the soldier's wild halloo ;

And there the sachem learned the rule he taught to kith and kin,

“Run from the white man when you find he smells of Hol-lands gin!”

A hundred years, and fifty more, had spread their leaves and snows,

A thousand rubs had flattened down each little cherub's nose,
When once again the bowl was filled, but not in mirth or joy,
'T was mingled by a mother's hand to cheer her parting boy.

Drink, John, she said, 't will do you good, — poor child, you'll never bear

This working in the dismal trench, out in the midnight air;
And if — God bless me! — you were hurt, 't would keep away the chill;

So John *did* drink, — and well he wrought that night at Bunker's Hill!

I tell you, there was generous warmth in good old English cheer;

I tell you 't was a pleasant thought to bring its symbol here;



'Tis but the fool that loves excess ; hast thou a drunken
soul ?

Thy bane is in thy shallow skull, not in my silver bowl !

I love the memory of the past, — its pressed yet fragrant
flowers, —

The moss that clothes its broken walls, — the ivy on its tow-
ers ; —

Nay, this poor bauble it bequeathed, — my eyes grow moist
and dim,

To think of all the vanished joys that danced around its brim.

Then fill a fair and honest cup, and bear it straight to me ;

The goblet hallows all it holds, whate'er the liquid be ;

And may the cherubs on its face protect me from the sin,

That dooms one to those dreadful words, — “ My dear, where
have you been ? ”



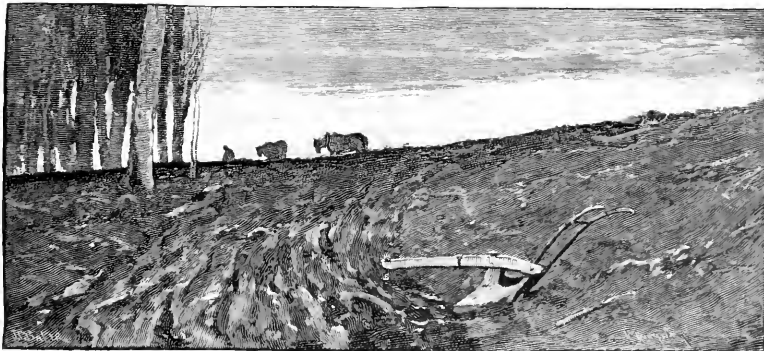


THE PLOUGHMAN.

ANNIVERSARY OF THE BERKSHIRE AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY,
OCTOBER 4, 1849.

CLEAR the brown path, to meet his coulter's gleam!
Lo! on he comes, behind his smoking team,
With toil's bright dew-drops on his sun-burnt brow,
The lord of earth, the hero of the plough!

First in the field before the reddening sun,
Last in the shadows when the day is done,
Line after line, along the bursting sod,
Marks the broad acres where his feet have trod;
Still, where he treads, the stubborn clods divide,

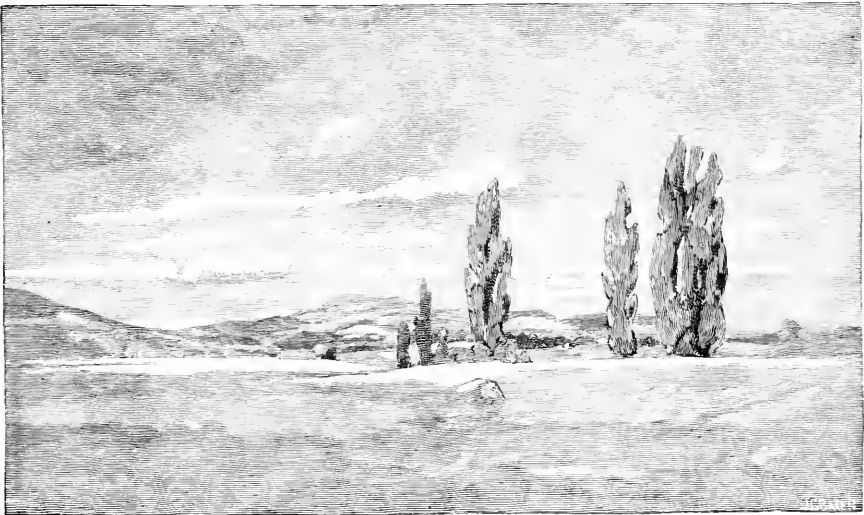


The smooth, fresh furrow opens deep and wide ;
Matted and dense the tangled turf upheaves,
Mellow and dark the ridgy cornfield cleaves ;
Up the steep hillside, where the laboring train
Slants the long track that scores the level plain ;
Through the moist valley, clogged with oozing clay,
The patient convoy breaks its destined way ;
At every turn the loosening chains resound,
The swinging ploughshare circles glistening round,
Till the wide field one billowy waste appears,
And wearied hands unbind the panting steers.

These are the hands whose sturdy labor brings
The peasant's food, the golden pomp of kings ;
This is the page, whose letters shall be seen
Changed by the sun to words of living green ;
This is the scholar, whose immortal pen
Spells the first lesson hunger taught to men ;
These are the lines which heaven-commanded Toil
Shows on his deed, — the charter of the soil !

O gracious Mother, whose benignant breast
Wakes us to life, and lulls us all to rest,
How thy sweet features, kind to every clime,
Mock with their smile the wrinkled front of time !
We stain thy flowers, — they blossom o'er the dead ;
We rend thy bosom, and it gives us bread ;
O'er the red field that trampling strife has torn,
Waves the green plumage of thy tasselled corn ;
Our maddening conflicts scar thy fairest plain,
Still thy soft answer is the growing grain.
Yet, O our Mother, while uncounted charms
Steal round our hearts in thine embracing arms,
Let not our virtues in thy love decay,
And thy fond sweetness waste our strength away.

No! by these hills, whose banners now displayed
In blazing cohorts Autumn has arrayed;
By yon twin summits, on whose splintery crests
The tossing hemlocks hold the eagles' nests;
By these fair plains the mountain circle screens,
And feeds with streamlets from its dark ravines,—
True to their home, these faithful arms shall toil
To crown with peace their own untainted soil;
And, true to God, to freedom, to mankind,
If her chained bandogs Faction shall unbind,
These stately forms, that bending even now
Bowed their strong manhood to the humble plough,
Shall rise erect, the guardians of the land,
The same stern iron in the same right hand,
Till o'er their hills the shouts of triumph run,
The sword has rescued what the ploughshare won!





A MOTHER'S SECRET.

How sweet the sacred legend — if unblamed
 In my slight verse such holy things are named —
 Of Mary's secret hours of hidden joy,
 Silent, but pondering on her wondrous boy!
 Ave, Maria! Pardon, if I wrong
 Those heavenly words that shame my earthly song!

The choral host had closed the Angel's strain
 Sung to the listening watch on Bethlehem's plain,
 And now the shepherds, hastening on their way,
 Sought the still hamlet where the Infant lay.
 They passed the fields that gleaning Ruth toiled o'er, —
 They saw afar the ruined threshing-floor
 Where Moab's daughter, homeless and forlorn,
 Found Boaz slumbering by his heaps of corn;
 And some remembered how the holy scribe,
 Skilled in the lore of every jealous tribe,
 Traced the warm blood of Jesse's royal son

To that fair alien, bravely wooed and won.
So fared they on to seek the promised sign,
That marked the anointed heir of David's line.

At last, by forms of earthly semblance led,
They found the crowded inn, the oxen's shed.
No pomp was there, no glory shone around
On the coarse straw that strewed the reeking ground;
One dim retreat a flickering torch betrayed, —
In that poor cell the Lord of Life was laid!

The wondering shepherds told their breathless tale
Of the bright choir that woke the sleeping vale;
Told how the skies with sudden glory flamed,
Told how the shining multitude proclaimed,
“Joy, joy to earth! Behold the hallowed morn!
In David's city Christ the Lord is born!
'Glory to God!' let angels shout on high,
'Good-will to men!' the listening earth reply!”

They spoke with hurried words and accents wild;
Calm in his cradle slept the heavenly child.
No trembling word the mother's joy revealed, —
One sigh of rapture, and her lips were sealed;
Unmoved she saw the rustic train depart,
But kept their words to ponder in her heart.

Twelve years had passed; the boy was fair and tall,
Growing in wisdom, finding grace with all.
The maids of Nazareth, as they trooped to fill
Their balanced urns beside the mountain rill,
The gathered matrons, as they sat and spun,
Spoke in soft words of Joseph's quiet son.
No voice had reached the Galilean vale
Of star-led kings, or awe-struck shepherd's tale;
In the meek, studious child they only saw
The future Rabbi, learned in Israel's law.

So grew the boy, and now the feast was near

When at the Holy Place the tribes appear.
Scarce had the home-bred child of Nazareth seen
Beyond the hills that girt the village green;
Save when at midnight, o'er the starlit sands,
Snatched from the steel of Herod's murdering bands,
A babe, close folded to his mother's breast,
Through Edom's wilds he sought the sheltering West.

Then Joseph spake: "Thy boy hath largely grown;
Weave him fine raiment, fitting to be shown;
Fair robes beseeem the pilgrim, as the priest:
Goes he not with us to the holy feast?"

And Mary culled the flaxen fibres white;
Till eve she spun; she spun till morning light.
The thread was twined; its parting meshes through
From hand to hand her restless shuttle flew,
Till the full web was wound upon the beam;
Love's curious toil,—a vest without a seam!

They reach the Holy Place, fulfil the days
To solemn feasting given, and grateful praise.
At last they turn, and far Moriah's height
Melts in the southern sky and fades from sight.
All day the dusky caravan has flowed
In devious trails along the winding road;
(For many a step their homeward path attends,
And all the sons of Abraham are as friends.)
Evening has come,—the hour of rest and joy,—
Hush! Hush! That whisper,—“Where is Mary's boy?”

O weary hour! O aching days that passed
Filled with strange fears each wilder than the last,—
The soldier's lance, the fierce centurion's sword,
The crushing wheels that whirl some Roman lord,
The midnight crypt that sucks the captive's breath,
The blistering sun on Hinnom's vale of death!

Thrice on his cheek had rained the morning light;
Thrice on his lips the mildewed kiss of night,

Crouched by a sheltering column's shining plinth,
Or stretched beneath the odorous terebinth.

At last, in desperate mood, they sought once more
The Temple's porches, searched in vain before ;
They found him seated with the ancient men, —
The grim old rufflers of the tongue and pen, —
Their bald heads glistening as they clustered near,
Their gray beards slanting as they turned to hear,
Lost in half-evilous wonder and surprise
That lips so fresh should utter words so wise.

And Mary said, — as one who, tried too long,
Tells all her grief and half her sense of wrong, —
“What is this thoughtless thing which thou hast done?
Lo, we have sought thee sorrowing, O my son!”

Few words he spake, and scarce of filial tone,
Strange words, their sense a mystery yet unknown ;
Then turned with them and left the holy hill,
To all their mild commands obedient still.

The tale was told to Nazareth's sober men,
And Nazareth's matrons told it oft again ;
The maids retold it at the fountain's side,
The youthful shepherds doubted or denied ;
It passed around among the listening friends,
With all that fancy adds and fiction lends,
Till newer marvels dimmed the young renown
Of Joseph's son, who talked the Rabbis down.

But Mary, faithful to its lightest word,
Kept in her heart the sayings she had heard,
Till the dread morning rent the Temple's veil,
And shuddering earth confirmed the wondrous tale.

Youth fades ; love droops ; the leaves of friendship fall :
A mother's secret hope outlives them all.



THE VOICELESS.

We count the broken lyres that rest
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,
But o'er their silent sister's breast
The wild-flowers who will stoop to number?
A few can touch the magic string,
And noisy Fame is proud to win them:—
Alas for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them!

Nay, grieve not for the dead alone
Whose song has told their hearts' sad story,—
Weep for the voiceless, who have known
The cross without the crown of glory!
Not where Leucadian breezes sweep
O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow,
But where the glistening night-dews weep
On nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

O hearts that break and give no sign
Save whitening lip and fading tresses,
Till Death pours out his cordial wine
Slow-dropped from Misery's crushing presses,—
If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven!



THE TWO STREAMS.

BEHOLD the rocky wall
 That down its sloping sides
 Pours the swift rain-drops, blending,
 as they fall,
 In rushing river-tides!

Yon stream, whose sources run
 Turned by a pebble's edge,
 Is Athabasca, rolling toward the
 sun
 Through the cleft mountain-
 ledge.

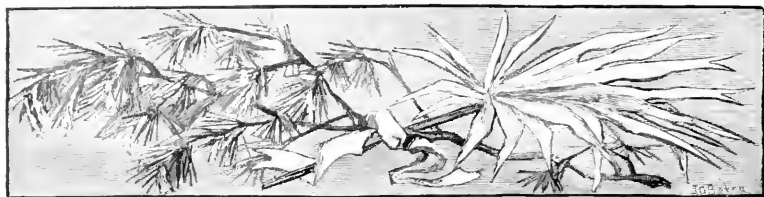
The slender rill had strayed,
 But for the slanting stone,
 To evening's ocean, with the tangled braid
 Of foam-flecked Oregon.

So from the heights of Will
 Life's parting stream descends,
 And, as a moment turns its slender rill,
 Each widening torrent bends, —

From the same cradle's side,
 From the same mother's knee, —
 One to long darkness and the frozen tide,
 One to the Peaceful Sea!



H. B. J. J. J.



BROTHER JONATHAN'S LAMENT FOR SISTER CAROLINE.

SHE has gone, — she has left us in passion and pride, —
Our stormy-browed sister, so long at our side !
She has torn her own star from our firmament's glow,
And turned on her brother the face of a foe !

O Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
We can never forget that our hearts have been one, —
Our foreheads both sprinkled in Liberty's name,
From the fountain of blood with the finger of flame !

You were always too ready to fire at a touch ;
But we said, " She is hasty, — she does not mean much."
We have scowled, when you uttered some turbulent threat ;
But Friendship still whispered, " Forgive and forget ! "

Has our love all died out ? Have its altars grown cold ?
Has the curse come at last which the fathers foretold ?
Then Nature must teach us the strength of the chain
That her petulant children would sever in vain.

They may fight till the buzzards are gorged with their spoil,
Till the harvest grows black as it rots in the soil,
Till the wolves and the catamounts troop from their caves,
And the shark tracks the pirate, the lord of the waves :

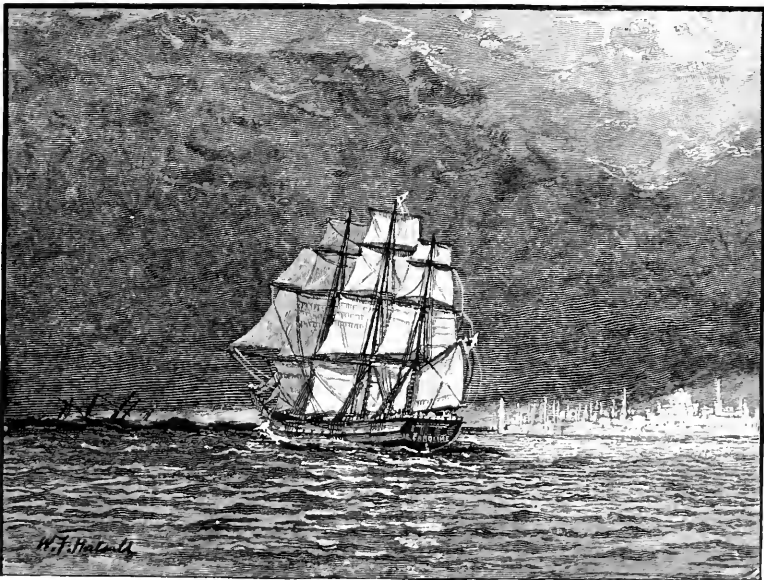
In vain is the strife! When its fury is past,
Their fortunes must flow in one channel at last,
As the torrents that rush from the mountains of snow
Roll mingled in peace through the valleys below.

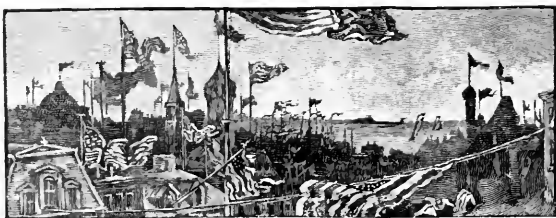
Our Union is river, lake, ocean, and sky:
Man breaks not the medal, when God cuts the die!
Though darkened with sulphur, though cloven with steel,
The blue arch will brighten, the waters will heal!

O Caroline, Caroline, child of the sun,
There are battles with Fate that can never be won!
The star-flowering banner must never be furled,
For its blossoms of light are the hope of the world!

Go, then, our rash sister! afar and aloof,
Run wild in the sunshine away from our roof;
But when your heart aches and your feet have grown sore,
Remember the pathway that leads to our door!

March 25, 1861.





THE FLOWER OF LIBERTY.

WHAT flower is this that greets the morn,
 Its hues from Heaven so freshly born?
 With burning star and flaming band
 It kindles all the sunset land:
 O tell us what its name may be, —
 Is this the Flower of Liberty?
 It is the banner of the free,
 The starry Flower of Liberty!

In savage Nature's far abode
 Its tender seed our fathers sowed;
 The storm-winds rocked its swelling bud,
 Its opening leaves were streaked with blood,
 Till lo! earth's tyrants shook to see
 The full-blown Flower of Liberty!
 Then hail the banner of the free,
 The starry Flower of Liberty!

Behold its streaming rays unite,
 One mingling flood of braided light, —
 The red that fires the Southern rose,
 With spotless white from Northern snows,
 And, spangled o'er its azure, see
 The sister Stars of Liberty!
 Then hail the banner of the free,
 The starry Flower of Liberty!

The blades of heroes fence it round,
 Where'er it springs is holy ground;
 From tower and dome its glories spread;
 It waves where lonely sentries tread;
 It makes the land as ocean free,
 And plants an empire on the sea!

Then hail the banner of the free,
 The starry Flower of Liberty!

Thy sacred leaves, fair Freedom's flower,
 Shall ever float on dome and tower,
 To all their heavenly colors true,
 In blackening frost or crimson dew,—
 And God love us as we love thee,
 Thrice holy Flower of Liberty!

Then hail the banner of the free,
 The starry FLOWER OF LIBERTY!

THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS.

THIS is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,
 Sails the unshadowed main,—
 The venturous bark that flings
 On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings
 In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings,
 And coral reefs lie bare,
 Where the cold sea-maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

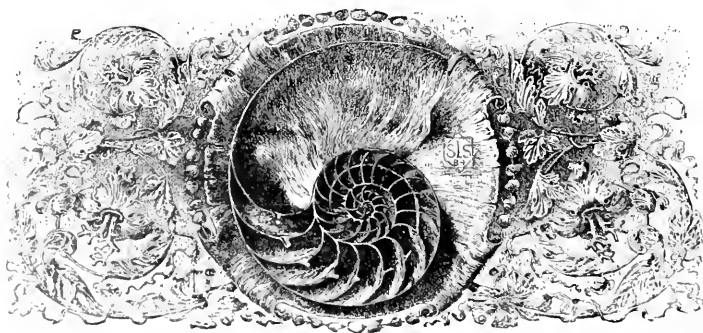
Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl!
 And every chambered cell,
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,
 As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,

Before thee lies revealed, —
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil
That spread his lustrous coil;
Still, as the spiral grew,
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,
Built up its idle door,
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,
Child of the wandering sea
Cast from her lap, forlorn!
From thy dead lips a clearer note is born
Than ever Triton blew from wreathéd horn!
While on mine ear it rings,
Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings:—

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll!
Leave thy low-vaulted past!
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!



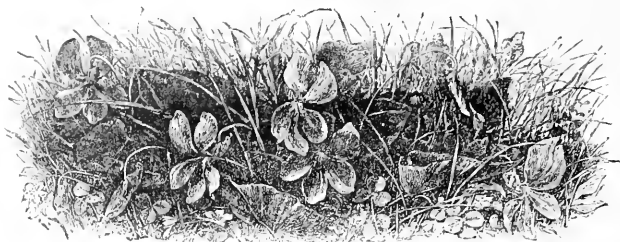


SUN AND SHADOW.

As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green,
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue :
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail ;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,—
Of breakers that whiten and roar ;
How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
They see him who gaze from the shore !
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lee,
As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade ;
Yet true to our course, though the shadows grow dark,
We'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore !



UNDER THE VIOLETS.

HER hands are cold; her face is white;
No more her pulses come and go;
Her eyes are shut to life and light;—
Fold the white vesture, snow on snow,
And lay her where the violets blow.

But not beneath a graven stone,
To plead for tears with alien eyes;
A slender cross of wood alone
Shall say, that here a maiden lies
In peace beneath the peaceful skies.

And gray old trees of hugest limb
Shall wheel their circling shadows round
To make the scorching sunlight dim
That drinks the greenness from the ground,
And drop their dead leaves on her mound.

When o'er their boughs the squirrels run,
And through their leaves the robins call,
And, ripening in the autumn sun,
The acorns and the chestnuts fall,
Doubt not that she will heed them all.

For her the morning choir shall sing
Its matins from the branches high,

And every minstrel-voice of Spring,
That trills beneath the April sky,
Shall greet her with its earliest cry.

When, turning round their dial-track,
Eastward the lengthening shadows pass,
Her little mourners, clad in black,
The crickets, sliding through the grass,
Shall pipe for her an evening mass.

At last the rootlets of the trees
Shall find the prison where she lies,
And bear the buried dust they seize
In leaves and blossoms to the skies.
So may the soul that warmed it rise!

If any, born of kindlier blood,
Should ask, What maiden lies below?
Say only this: A tender bud,
That tried to blossom in the snow,
Lies withered where the violets blow.





HYMN OF TRUST.

O Love Divine, that stooped to share
Our sharpest pang, our bitterest tear,
On Thee we cast each earth-born care,
We smile at pain while Thou art near!

Though long the weary way we tread,
And sorrow crown each lingering year,
No path we shun, no darkness dread,
Our hearts still whispering, Thou art near!

When drooping pleasure turns to grief,
And trembling faith is changed to fear,
The murmuring wind, the quivering leaf,
Shall softly tell us, Thou art near!

On Thee we fling our burdening woe,
O Love Divine, forever dear,
Content to suffer while we know,
Living and dying, Thou art near!



DOROTHY Q.

A FAMILY PORTRAIT.

GRANDMOTHER'S mother : her age, I guess,
 Thirteen summers, or something less ;
 Girlish bust, but womanly air ;
 Smooth, square forehead with uprolled hair,
 Lips that lover has never kissed ;
 Taper fingers and slender wrist ;
 Hanging sleeves of stiff brocade ;
 So they painted the little maid.

On her hand a parrot green
 Sits unmoving and broods serene.
 Hold up the canvas full in view, —
 Look ! there's a rent the light shines through,
 Dark with a century's fringe of dust, —
 That was a Red-Coat's rapier-thrust !

Such is the tale the lady old,
Dorothy's daughter's daughter, told.

Who the painter was none may tell, —
One whose best was not over well;
Hard and dry, it must be confessed,
Flat as a rose that has long been pressed;
Yet in her cheek the hues are bright,
Dainty colors of red and white,
And in her slender shape are seen
Hint and promise of stately mien.

Look not on her with eyes of scorn, —
Dorothy Q. was a lady born!
Ay! since the galloping Normans came,
England's annals have known her name;
And still to the three-hilled rebel town
Dear is that ancient name's renown,
For many a civic wreath they won,
The youthful sire and the gray-haired son.

O Damsel Dorothy! Dorothy Q.!
Strange is the gift that I owe to you;
Such a gift as never a king
Save to daughter or son might bring, —
All my tenure of heart and hand,
All my title to house and land;
Mother and sister and child and wife
And joy and sorrow and death and life!

What if a hundred years ago
Those close-shut lips had answered No,
When forth the tremulous question came
That cost the maiden her Norman name,
And under the folds that look so still
The bodice swelled with the bosom's thrill?

Should I be I, or would it be
One tenth another, to nine tenths me?

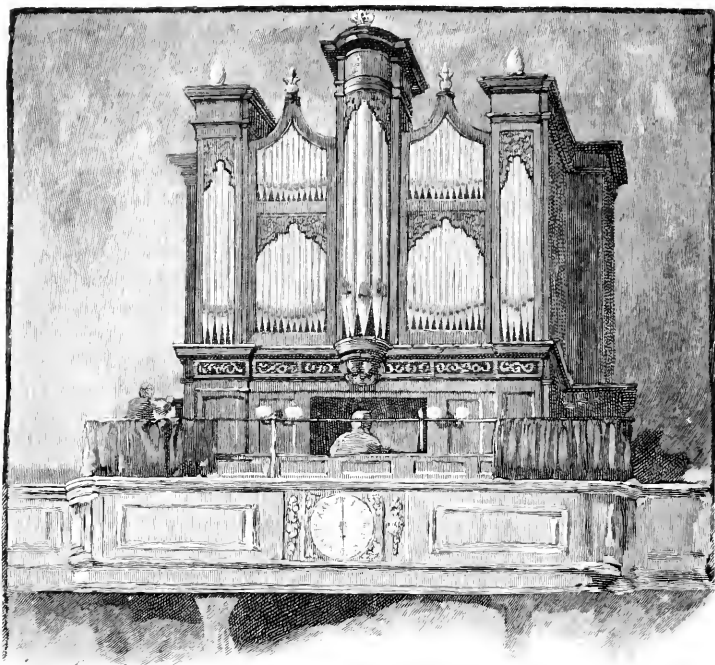
Soft is the breath of a maiden's Yes :
Not the light gossamer stirs with less ;
But never a cable that holds so fast
Through all the battles of wave and blast,
And never an echo of speech or song
That lives in the babbling air so long !
There were tones in the voice that whispered then
You may hear to-day in a hundred men.

O lady and lover, how faint and far
Your images hover, — and here we are,
Solid and stirring in flesh and bone, —
Edward's and Dorothy's — all their own, —
A goodly record for Time to show
Of a syllable spoken so long ago ! —
Shall I bless you, Dorothy, or forgive
For the tender whisper that bade me live?

It shall be a blessing, my little maid !
I will heal the stab of the Red-Coat's blade,
And freshen the gold of the tarnished frame,
And gild with a rhyme your household name ;
So you shall smile on us brave and bright
As first you greeted the morning's light,
And live untroubled by woes and fears
Through a second youth of a hundred years.

1871.





THE ORGAN-BLOWER.

DEVOUTEST of my Sunday friends,
 The patient Organ-blower bends;
 I see his figure sink and rise,
 (Forgive me, Heaven, my wandering eyes!)
 A moment lost, the next half seen,
 His head above the scanty screen,
 Still measuring out his deep salaams
 Through quavering hymns and panting psalms.

No priest that prays in gilded stole,
 To save a rich man's mortgaged soul;
 No sister, fresh from holy vows,
 So humbly stoops, so meekly bows;
 His large obeisance puts to shame
 The proudest genuflecting dame,

Whose Easter bonnet low descends
With all the grace devotion lends.

O brother with the supple spine,
How much we owe those bows of thine!
Without thine arm to lend the breeze,
How vain the finger on the keys!
Though all unmatched the player's skill,
Those thousand throats were dumb and still:
Another's art may shape the tone,
The breath that fills it is thine own.

Six days the silent Memnon waits
Behind his temple's folded gates;
But when the seventh day's sunshine falls
Through rainbowed windows on the walls,
He breathes, he sings, he shouts, he fills
The quivering air with rapturous thrills;
The roof resounds, the pillars shake,
And all the slumbering echoes wake!

The Preacher from the Bible-text
With weary words my soul has vexed
(Some stranger, fumbling far astray
To find the lesson for the day);
He tells us truths too plainly true,
And reads the service all askew,—
Why, why the — mischief — can't he look
Beforehand in the service-book?

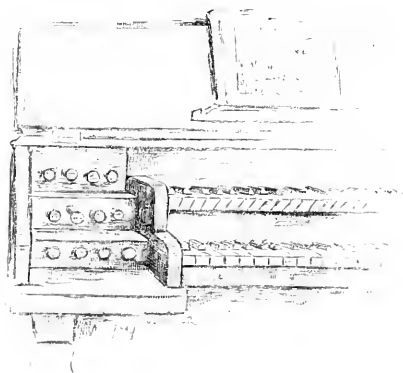
But thou, with decent mien and face,
Art always ready in thy place;
Thy strenuous blast, whate'er the tune,
As steady as the strong monsoon;

Thy only dread a leathery creak,
Or small residual extra squeak,
To send along the shadowy aisles
A sunlit wave of dimpled smiles.

Not all the preaching, O my friend,
Comes from the church's pulpit end!
Not all that bend the knee and bow
Yield service half so true as thou!
One simple task performed aright,
With slender skill, but all thy might,
Where honest labor does its best,
And leaves the player all the rest.

This many-diapasoned maze,
Through which the breath of being strays,
Whose music makes our earth divine,
Has work for mortal hands like mine.
My duty lies before me. Lo,
The lever there! Take hold and blow!
And He whose hand is on the keys
Will play the tune as He shall please.

1872.



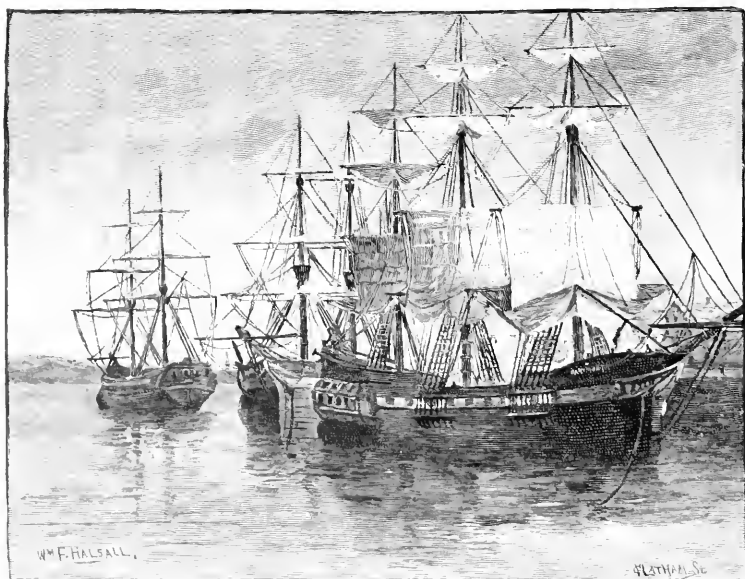


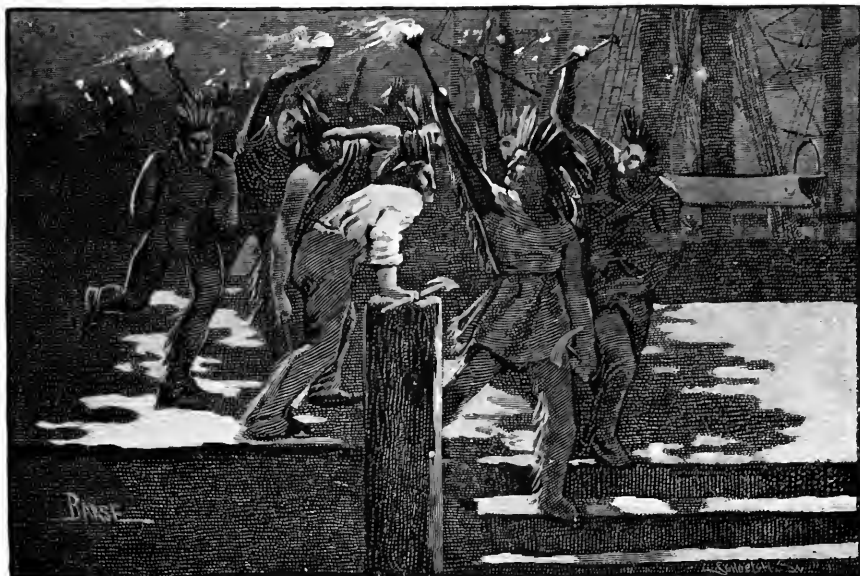
A BALLAD OF THE BOSTON TEA-PARTY.

No! never such a draught was poured
 Since Hebe served with nectar
 The bright Olympians and their Lord,
 Her over-kind protector, —
 Since Father Noah squeezed the grape
 And took to such behaving
 As would have shamed our grandsire ape
 Before the days of shaving, —
 No! ne'er was mingled such a draught
 In palace, hall, or arbor,
 As freemen brewed and tyrants quaffed
 That night in Boston Harbor!
 It kept King George so long awake
 His brain at last got addled,
 It made the nerves of Britain shake,
 With sevenscore millions saddled;
 Before that bitter cup was drained,
 Amid the roar of cannon,
 The Western war-cloud's crimson stained
 The Thames, the Clyde, the Shannon;
 Full many a six-foot grenadier
 The flattened grass had measured,

And many a mother many a year
Her tearful memories treasured;
Fast spread the tempest's darkening pall,
The mighty realms were troubled,
The storm broke loose, but first of all
The Boston teapot bubbled!

An evening party, — only that,
No formal invitation,
No gold-laced coat, no stiff cravat,
No feast in contemplation,
No silk-robed dames, no fiddling band,
No flowers, no songs, no dancing, —
A tribe of Red men, axe in hand, —
Behold the guests advancing!
How fast the stragglers join the throng,
From stall and workshop gathered!
The lively barber skips along
And leaves a chin half-lathered;





The smith has flung his hammer down,—
The horseshoe still is glowing;
The truant tapster at the Crown
Has left a beer-cask flowing;
The cooper's boys have dropped the adze,
And trot behind their master;
Up run the tarry ship-yard lads,—
The crowd is hurrying faster,—
Out from the Millpond's purlieus gush
The streams of white-faced millers,
And down their slippery alleys rush
The lusty young Fort-Hillers;
The ropewalk lends its 'prentice crew,—
The tories seize the omen:
"Ay, boys, you'll soon have work to do
For England's rebel foemen,
'King Hancock,' Adams, and their gang,
That fire the mob with treason,—
When these we shoot and those we hang
The town will come to reason."

On — on to where the tea-ships ride!
And now their ranks are forming, —
A rush, and up the Dartmouth's side
The Mohawk band is swarming!
See the fierce natives! What a glimpse
Of paint and fur and feather,
As all at once the full-grown imps
Light on the deck together!
A scarf the pigtail's secret keeps,
A blanket hides the breeches, —
And out the curséd cargo leaps,
And overboard it pitches!

O woman, at the evening board
So gracious, sweet, and purring,
So happy while the tea is poured,
So blest while spoons are stirring,
What martyr can compare with thee,
The mother, wife, or daughter,
That night, instead of best Bohea,
Condemned to milk and water!

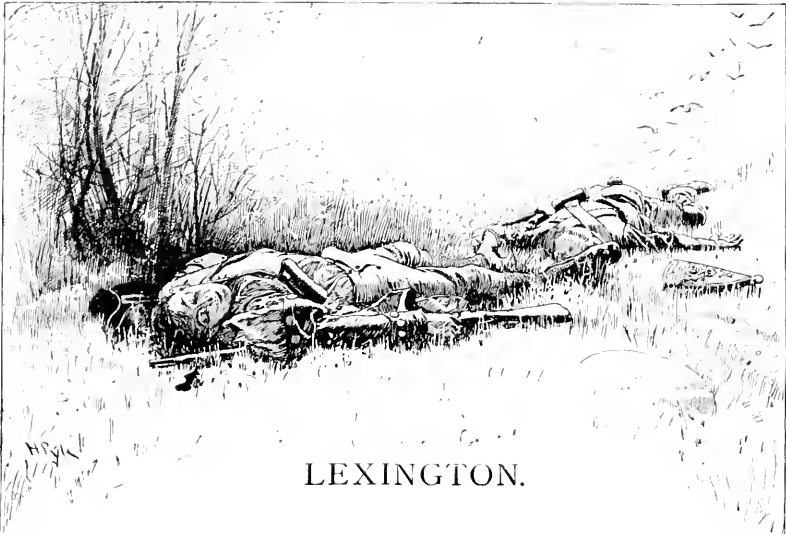
Ah, little dreams the quiet dame
Who plies with rock and spindle
The patient flax, how great a flame
Yon little spark shall kindle!
The lurid morning shall reveal
A fire no king can smother
Where British flint and Boston steel
Have clashed against each other!
Old charters shrivel in its track,
His Worship's bench has crumbled,
It climbs and clasps the union-jack,
Its blazoned pomp is humbled,

The flags go down on land and sea
Like corn before the reapers ;
So burned the fire that brewed the tea
That Boston served her keepers !

The waves that wrought a century's wreck
Have rolled o'er whig and tory ;
The Mohawks on the Dartmouth's deck
Still live in song and story ;
The waters in the rebel bay
Have kept the tea-leaf savor ;
Our old North-Enders in their spray
Still taste a Hyson flavor ;
And Freedom's teacup still o'erflows
With ever fresh libations,
To cheat of slumber all her foes
And cheer the wakening nations !

1874.





LEXINGTON.

SLOWLY the mist o'er the meadow was creeping,
Bright on the dewy buds glistened the sun,
When from his couch, while his children were sleeping,
Rose the bold rebel and shouldered his gun.
Waving her golden veil
Over the silent dale,
Blithe looked the morning on cottage and spire;
Hushed was his parting sigh,
While from his noble eye
Flashed the last sparkle of liberty's fire.

On the smooth green where the fresh leaf is springing
Calmly the first-born of glory have met;
Hark! the death-volley around them is ringing!
Look! with their life-blood the young grass is wet!
Faint is the feeble breath,
Murmuring low in death,
"Tell to our sons how their fathers have died;"
Nerveless the iron hand,
Raised for its native land,
Lies by the weapon that gleams at its side.

Over the hill-sides the wild knell is tolling,
From their far hamlets the yeomanry come;
As through the storm-clouds the thunder-burst rolling,
Circles the beat of the mustering drum.
Fast on the soldier's path
Darken the waves of wrath,
Long have they gathered and loud shall they fail;
Red glares the musket's flash,
Sharp rings the rifle's crash,
Blazing and clanging from thicket and wall.

Gayly the plume of the horseman was dancing,
Never to shadow his cold brow again;
Proudly at morning the war-steed was prancing,
Reeking and panting he droops on the rein;
Pale is the lip of scorn,
Voiceless the trumpet horn,
Torn is the silken-fringed red cross on high;
Many a belted breast
Low on the turf shall rest,
Ere the dark hunters the herd have passed by.



Snow-girdled crags where the hoarse wind is raving,
Rocks where the weary floods murmur and wail,
Wilds where the fern by the furrow is waving,
Reeled with the echoes that rode on the gale;
Far as the tempest thrills
Over the darkened hills,
Far as the sunshine streams over the plain,
Roused by the tyrant band,
Woke all the mighty land,
Girded for battle, from mountain to main.

Green be the graves where her martyrs are lying!
Shroudless and tombless they sunk to their rest, —
While o'er their ashes the starry fold flying
Wraps the proud eagle they roused from his nest.
Borne on her Northern pine,
Long o'er the foaming brine
Spread her broad banner to storm and to sun;
Heaven keep her ever free,
Wide as o'er land and sea
Floats the fair emblem her heroes have won!





GRANDMOTHER'S STORY OF BUNKER-HILL BATTLE.

AS SHE SAW IT FROM THE BELFRY.

'T is like stirring living embers when, at eighty, one remembers

All the achings and the quakings of "the times that tried
men's souls ;"

When I talk of *Whig* and *Tory*, when I tell the *Rebel* story,
To you the words are ashes, but to me they're burning coals.

I heard the muskets' rattle of the April running battle ;
Lord Percy's hunted soldiers, I can see their red coats still ;
But a deadly chill comes o'er me, as the day looms up before me,

When a thousand men lay bleeding on the slopes of Bunker's
Hill.

'T was a peaceful summer's morning, when the first thing
gave us warning

Was the booming of the cannon from the river and the shore :

"Child," says grandma, "what's the matter, what is all this noise and clatter?
Have those scalping Indian devils come to murder us once more?"

Poor old soul! my sides were shaking in the midst of all my quaking,
To hear her talk of Indians when the guns began to roar:
She had seen the burning village, and the slaughter and the pillage,
When the Mohawks killed her father with their bullets through his door.

Then I said, "Now, dear old granny, don't you fret and worry any,
For I'll soon come back and tell you whether this is work or play;
There can't be mischief in it, so I won't be gone a minute"—
For a minute then I started. I was gone the livelong day.

No time for bodice-lacing or for looking-glass grimacing;
Down my hair went as I hurried, tumbling half-way to my heels;
God forbid your ever knowing, when there's blood around her flowing,
How the lonely, helpless daughter of a quiet household feels!

In the street I heard a thumping; and I knew it was the stumping
Of the Corporal, our old neighbor, on that wooden leg he wore,
With a knot of women round him,---it was lucky I had found him,
So I followed with the others, and the Corporal marched before.



They were making for the steeple,
—the old soldier and his people;

The pigeons circled round us as we climbed the creaking
stair;

Just across the narrow river — Oh, so close it made me
shiver! —

Stood a fortress on the hill-top that but yesterday was bare.

Not slow our eyes to find it; well we knew who stood be-
hind it,

Though the earthwork hid them from us, and the stubborn
walls were dumb:

Here were sister, wife, and mother, looking wild upon each
other,

And their lips were white with terror as they said, THE HOUR
HAS COME!

The morning slowly wasted, not a morsel had we tasted,
And our heads were almost splitting with the cannons' deaf-
ening thrill,

When a figure tall and stately round the rampart strode sedately ;

It was PRESCOTT, one since told me ; he commanded on the hill.

Every woman's heart grew bigger when we saw his manly figure,

With the banyan buckled round it, standing up so straight and tall ;

Like a gentleman of leisure who is strolling out for pleasure,
Through the storm of shells and cannon-shot he walked around the wall.

At eleven the streets were swarming, for the red-coats' ranks were forming ;

At noon in marching order they were moving to the piers ;
How the bayonets gleamed and glistened, as we looked far down, and listened

To the trampling and the drum-beat of the belted grenadiers !

At length the men have started, with a cheer (it seemed faint-hearted),

In their scarlet regimentals, with their knapsacks on their backs,

And the reddening, rippling water, as after a sea-fight's slaughter,

Round the barges gliding onward blushed like blood along their tracks.

So they crossed to the other border, and again they formed in order ;

And the boats came back for soldiers, came for soldiers, soldiers still :

The time seemed everlasting to us women faint and fasting,—
At last they're moving, marching, marching proudly up the hill.

We can see the bright steel glancing all along the lines advancing —

Now the front rank fires a volley — they have thrown away their shot ;

For behind their earthwork lying, all the balls above them flying,

Our people need not hurry ; so they wait and answer not.

Then the Corporal, our old cripple (he would swear sometimes and tittle), —

He had heard the bullets whistle (in the old French war) before, —

Calls out in words of jeering, just as if they all were hearing, —

And his wooden leg thumps fiercely on the dusty belfry floor : —

“ Oh ! fire away, ye villains, and earn King George's shillin's, But ye 'll waste a ton of powder afore a ‘ rebel ’ falls ;

You may bang the dirt and welcome, they 're as safe as Dan'l Malcolm

Ten foot beneath the gravestone that you've splintered with your balls ! ”

In the hush of expectation, in the awe and trepidation Of the dread approaching moment, we are wellnigh breathless all ;

Though the rotten bars are failing on the rickety belfry railing,

We are crowding up against them like the waves against a wall.

Just a glimpse (the air is clearer), they are nearer, — nearer, — nearer,

When a flash — a curling smoke-wreath — then a crash — the steeple shakes —

The deadly truce is ended; the tempest's shroud is rended;
Like a morning mist it gathered, like a thunder-cloud it breaks!

Oh the sight our eyes discover as the blue-black smoke blows
over!

The red-coats stretched in windrows as a mower rakes his hay;
Here a scarlet heap is lying, there a headlong crowd is flying
Like a billow that has broken and is shivered into spray.

Then we cried, "The troops are routed! they are beat—it
can't be doubted!

God be thanked, the fight is over!"—Ah! the grim old sol-
dier's smile!

"Tell us, tell us why you look so?" (we could hardly speak,
we shook so),—

"Are they beaten? *Are* they beaten? ARE they beaten?"
—"Wait a while."

Oh the trembling and the terror! for too soon we saw our
error:

They are baffled, not defeated; we have driven them back in
vain;

And the columns that were scattered, round the colors that
were tattered,

Toward the sullen silent fortress turn their belted breasts
again.

All at once, as we were gazing, lo the roofs of Charlestown
blazing!

They have fired the harmless village; in an hour it will be
down!

The Lord in heaven confound them, rain his fire and brim-
stone round them,—

The robbing, murdering red-coats, that would burn a peace-
ful town!

They are marching, stern and solemn; we can see each massive column

As they near the naked earth-mound with the slanting walls so steep.

Have our soldiers got faint-hearted, and in noiseless haste departed?

Are they panic-struck and helpless? Are they palsied or asleep?

Now! the walls they're almost under! scarce a rod the foes asunder!

Not a firelock flashed against them! up the earthwork they will swarm!

But the words have scarce been spoken, when the ominous calm is broken,

And a bellowing crash has emptied all the vengeance of the storm!

So again, with murderous slaughter, pelted backwards to the water,

Fly Pigot's running heroes and the frightened braves of Howe;

And we shout, "At last they're done for, it's their barges they have run for:

They are beaten, beaten, beaten; and the battle's over now!"

And we looked, poor timid creatures, on the rough old soldier's features,

Our lips afraid to question, but he knew what we would ask:

"Not sure," he said; "keep quiet, — once more, I guess, they'll try it —

Here's damnation to the cut-throats!" — then he handed me his flask,

Saying, "Gal, you're looking shaky; have a drop of old Jamaicaiky ;

I'm afeard there'll be more trouble afore the job is done ;"

So I took one scorching swallow ; dreadful faint I felt and hollow,

Standing there from early morning when the firing was begun.

All through those hours of trial I had watched a calm clock dial,

As the hands kept creeping, creeping,—they were creeping round to four,

When the old man said, " They're forming with their bago-nets fixed for storming :

It's the death-grip that's a coming,—they will try the works once more."





With brazen trumpets blaring, the flames behind them glaring,
ing,

The deadly wall before them, in close array they come;
Still onward, upward toiling, like a dragon's fold uncoiling, —
Like the rattlesnake's shrill warning the reverberating drum!

Over heaps all torn and gory — shall I tell the fearful story,
How they surged above the breastwork as a sea breaks over
a deck;

How, driven, yet scarce defeated, our worn-out men retreated,
With their powder-horns all emptied, like the swimmers from
a wreck?

It has all been told and painted; as for me, they say I fainted,
And the wooden-legged old Corporal stumped with me down
the stair:

When I woke from dreams affrighted the evening lamps were
lighted, —

On the floor a youth was lying; his bleeding breast was bare.

And I heard through all the flurry, "Send for WARREN!
hurry! hurry!"

Tell him here's a soldier bleeding, and he'll come and dress
his wound!"

Ah, we knew not till the morrow told its tale of death and
sorrow,

How the starlight found him stiffened on the dark and
bloody ground.

Who the youth was, what his name was, where the place
from which he came was,

Who had brought him from the battle, and had left him at
our door,

He could not speak to tell us; but 't was one of our brave
fellows,

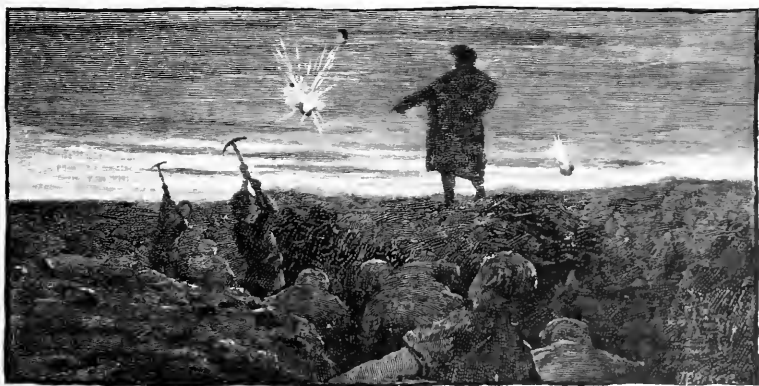
As the homespun plainly showed us which the dying soldier
wore.



For they all thought he was dying, as they gathered round
him crying, —
And they said, “ Oh, how they ’ll miss him ! ” and, “ What *will*
his mother do ? ”
Then, his eyelids just unclosing like a child’s that has been
dozing,
He faintly murmured, “ Mother ! ” — and — I saw his eyes
were blue.

— “ Why, grandma, how you ’re winking ! ” — Ah, my child,
it sets me thinking
Of a story not like this one. Well, he somehow lived along ;
So we came to know each other, and I nursed him like a —
mother,
Till at last he stood before me, tall, and rosy-cheeked, and
strong.

And we sometimes walked together in the pleasant summer
weather ;
— “ Please to tell us what his name was ? ” — Just your own,
my little dear, —
There ’s his picture Copley painted : we became so well ac-
quainted,
That — in short, that ’s why I ’m grandma, and you children
all are here !





BILL AND JOE.

COME, dear old comrade, you and I
 Will steal an hour from days gone by, —
 The shining days when life was new,
 And all was bright with morning dew, —
 The lusty days of long ago,
 When you were Bill and I was Joe.

Your name may flaunt a titled trail
 Proud as a cockerel's rainbow tail,
 And mine as brief appendix wear
 As Tam O'Shanter's luckless mare ;
 To-day, old friend, remember still
 That I am Joe and you are Bill.

You've won the great world's envied prize,
 And grand you look in people's eyes,
 With H O N. and L L D.
 In big brave letters, fair to see, —

Your fist, old fellow! off they go! —
How are you, Bill? How are you, Joe?

You've worn the judge's ermined robe;
You've taught your name to half the globe;
You've sung mankind a deathless strain;
You've made the dead past live again:
The world may call you what it will,
But you and I are Joe and Bill.

The chaffing young folks stare and say,
"See those old buffers, bent and gray, —
They talk like fellows in their teens!
Mad, poor old boys! That's what it means," —
And shake their heads; they little know
The throbbing hearts of Bill and Joe! —

How Bill forgets his hour of pride,
While Joe sits smiling at his side;
How Joe, in spite of time's disguise,
Finds the old schoolmate in his eyes, —
Those calm, stern eyes that melt and fill
As Joe looks fondly up at Bill.

Ah, pensive scholar, what is fame?
A fitful tongue of leaping flame;
A giddy whirlwind's fickle gust,
That lifts a pinch of mortal dust:
A few swift years, and who can show
Which dust was Bill and which was Joe?

The weary idol takes his stand,
Holds out his bruised and aching hand,
While gaping thousands come and go, —
How vain it seems, this empty show!

Till all at once his pulses thrill; —
 'Tis poor old Joe's "God bless you, Bill!"

And shall we breathe in happier spheres
 The names that pleased our mortal ears;
 In some sweet lull of harp and song
 For earth-born spirits none too long,
 Just whispering of the world below
 Where this was Bill, and that was Joe?

No matter; while our home is here
 No sounding name is half so dear;
 When fades at length our lingering day,
 Who cares what pompous tombstones say?
 Read on the hearts that love us still,
Hic jacet Joe. *Hic jacet* Bill.

CONTENTMENT.

"Man wants but little here below."

LITTLE I ask; my wants are few;
 I only wish a hut of stone,
 (A *very plain* brown stone will do,) —
 That I may call my own; —
 And close at hand is such a one,
 In yonder street that fronts the sun.

Plain food is quite enough for me;
 Three courses are as good as ten; —
 If Nature can subsist on three,
 Thank Heaven for three. Amen!
 I always thought cold victuals nice; —
 My *choice* would be vanilla-ice.



I care not much for gold or land; —
 Give me a mortgage here and there, —
 Some good bank-stock, some note of hand,
 Or trifling railroad share, —
 I only ask that Fortune send
 A *little* more than I shall spend.

Honors are silly toys, I know,
 And titles are but empty names;
 I would, *perhaps*, be Plenipo, —
 But only near St. James;
 I'm very sure I should not care
 To fill our Gubernator's chair.

Jewels are baubles; 't is a sin
 To care for such unfruitful things; —
 One good-sized diamond in a pin, —
 Some, *not so large*, in rings, —
 A ruby, and a pearl, or so,
 Will do for me; — I laugh at show.



My dame should dress in cheap attire;
 (Good, heavy silks are never dear;)
 I own perhaps I *might* desire
 Some shawls of true Cashmere,—
 Some marrowy crapes of China silk,
 Like wrinkled skins on scalded milk.

I would not have the horse I drive
 So fast that folks must stop and stare;
 An easy gait — two, forty-five —
 Suits me; I do not care; —
 Perhaps, for just a *single spurt*,
 Some seconds less would do no hurt.

Of pictures, I should like to own
 Titians and Raphaels three or four, —
 I love so much their style and tone, —
 One Turner, and no more,
 (A landscape, — foreground golden dirt, —
 The sunshine painted with a squirt.)

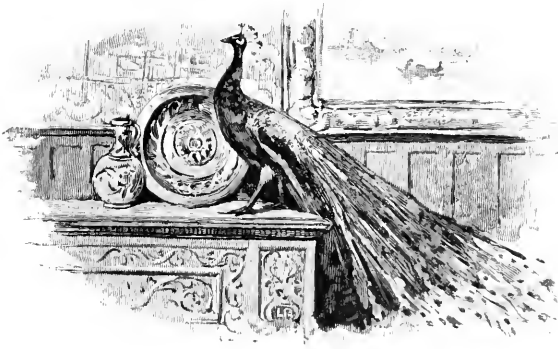
Of books but few, — some fifty score
 For daily use, and bound for wear;
 The rest upon an upper floor; —
 Some *little* luxury *there*

Of red morocco's gilded gleam,
And vellum rich as country cream.

Busts, cameos, gems, — such things as these,
Which others often show for pride,
I value for their power to please,
And selfish churls deride; —
One Stradivarius, *I* confess,
Two Meerschaums, *I* would fain possess.

Wealth's wasteful tricks *I* will not learn
Nor ape the glittering upstart fool; —
Shall not carved tables serve my turn,
But *all* must be of buhl?
Give grasping pomp its double share, —
I ask but *one* recumbent chair.

Thus humble let me live and die,
Nor long for Midas' golden touch;
If Heaven more generous gifts deny,
I shall not miss them *much*, —
Too grateful for the blessing lent
Of simple tastes and mind content!





THE DEACON'S MASTERPIECE;

OR, THE WONDERFUL "ONE-HOSS SHAY."

A LOGICAL STORY.

HAVE you heard of the wonderful one-hoss shay,
That was built in such a logical way
It ran a hundred years to a day,
And then of a sudden, it —— ah, but stay,
I'll tell you what happened without delay,
Scaring the parson into fits,
Frightening people out of their wits, —
Have you ever heard of that, I say?

Seventeen hundred and fifty-five.
Georgius Secundus was then alive, —
Snuffy old drone from the German hive.
That was the year when Lisbon-town
Saw the earth open and gulp her down,
And Braddock's army was done so brown,
Left without a scalp to its crown.
It was on the terrible Earthquake-day
That the Deacon finished the one-hoss shay.

Now in building of chaises, I tell you what,
There is always *somewhere* a weakest spot.

In hub, tire, felloe, in spring or thill,
 In panel, or crossbar, or floor, or sill,
 In screw, bolt, thoroughbrace, — lurking still,
 Find it somewhere you must and will, —
 Above or below, or within or without, —
 And that 's the reason, beyond a doubt,
 That a chaise *breaks down*, but does n't *wear out*.

But the Deacon swore, (as Deacons do,
 With an "I dew vum," or an "I tell *yeou*,")
 He would build one shay to beat the taown
 'n' the keounty, 'n' all the kentry raoun';
 It should be so built that it *couldn'* break daown:
 — "Fur," said the Deacon, "'t 's mighty plain
 Thut the weakes' place mus' stan' the strain;
 'n' the way t' fix it, uz I maintain,
 Is only jest
 T' make that place uz strong uz the rest."

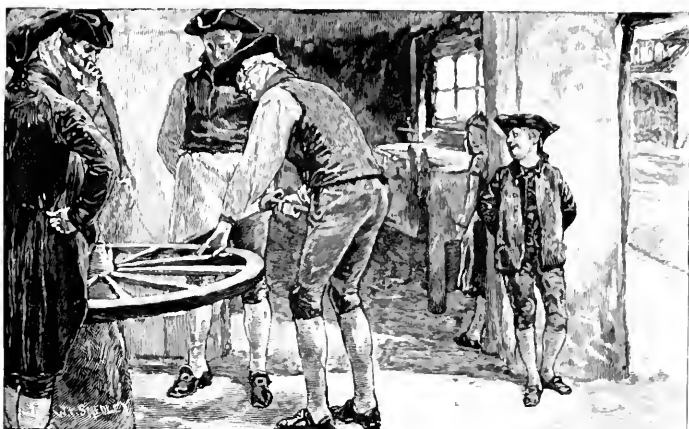
So the Deacon inquired of the village folk
 Where he could find the strongest oak,
 That could n't be split nor bent nor broke, —
 That was for spokes and floor and sills;
 He sent for lancewood to make the thills;
 The crossbars were ash, from the straightest trees,
 The panels of white-wood, that cuts like cheese,
 But lasts like iron for things like these;
 The hubs of logs from the "Settler's ellum," —
 Last of its timber, — they could n't sell 'em,
 Never an axe had seen their chips,
 And the wedges flew from between their lips,
 Their blunt ends frizzled like celery-tips;
 Step and prop-iron, bolt and screw,
 Spring, tire, axle, and linchpin too,
 Steel of the finest, bright and blue;



Thoroughbrace bison-skin, thick and wide;
 Boot, top, dasher, from tough old hide
 Found in the pit when the tanner died.
 That was the way he "put her through." —
 "There!" said the Deacon, "naow she'll dew!"

Do! I tell you, I rather guess
 She was a wonder, and nothing less!
 Colts grew horses, beards turned gray,
 Deacon and deaconess dropped away,
 Children and grandchildren — where were they?
 But there stood the stout old one-hoss shay
 As fresh as on Lisbon-Earthquake-day!

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED; — it came and found
 The Deacon's masterpiece strong and sound.
 Eighteen hundred increased by ten;
 "Hahnsum kerridge" they called it then.
 Eighteen hundred and twenty came; —
 Running as usual; much the same.
 Thirty and forty at last arrive,
 And then come fifty, and FIFTY-FIVE.



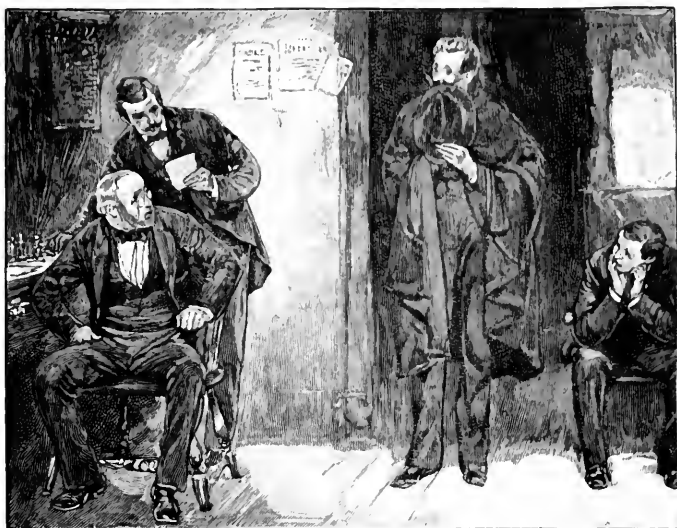
Little of all we value here
 Wakes on the morn of its hundredth year
 Without both feeling and looking queer.
 In fact, there's nothing that keeps its youth,
 So far as I know, but a tree and truth.
 (This is a moral that runs at large ;
 Take it. — You're welcome. — No extra charge.)

FIRST OF NOVEMBER, — the Earthquake-day —
 There are traces of age in the one-hoss shay,
 A general flavor of mild decay,
 But nothing local, as one may say.
 There could n't be, — for the Deacon's art
 Had made it so like in every part
 That there was n't a chance for one to start.
 For the wheels were just as strong as the thills,
 And the floor was just as strong as the sills,
 And the panels just as strong as the floor,
 And the whipple-tree neither less nor more,
 And the back-crossbar as strong as the fore,
 And spring and axle and hub *encore*.
 And yet, *as a whole*, it is past a doubt
 In another hour it will be *worn out* !

First of November, 'Fifty-five!
This morning the parson takes a drive.
Now, small boys, get out of the way!
Here comes the wonderful one-hoss shay,
Drawn by a rat-tailed, ewe-necked bay.
"Huddup!" said the parson. — Off went they.
The parson was working his Sunday's text, —
Had got to *fifthly*, and stopped perplexed
At what the — Moses — was coming next.
All at once the horse stood still,
Close by the meet'n'-house on the hill.
— First a shiver and then a thrill,
Then something decidedly like a spill, —
And the parson was sitting upon a rock,
At half past nine by the meet'n'-house clock, —
Just the hour of the Earthquake shock!
— What do you think the parson found,
When he got up and stared around?
The poor old chaise in a heap or mound,
As if it had been to the mill and ground!
You see, of course, if you're not a dunce,
How it went to pieces all at once, —
All at once, and nothing first, —
Just as bubbles do when they burst.

End of the wonderful one-hoss shay.
Logic is logic. That's all I say.





DE SAUTY.

AN ELECTRO-CHEMICAL ECLOGUE.

*Professor.**Blue-Nose.*

PROFESSOR.

TELL me, O Provincial! speak, Ceruleo-Nasal!
 Lives there one De Sauty extant now among you,
 Whispering Boanerges, son of silent thunder,
 Holding talk with nations?

Is there a De Sauty ambulant on Tellus,
 Bifid-cleft like mortals, dormant in nightcap,
 Having sight, smell, hearing, food-receiving feature
 Three times daily patent?

Breathes there such a being, O Ceruleo-Nasal?
 Or is he a *mythus*,—ancient word for “humbug,”—
 Such as Livy told about the wolf that wet-nursed
 Romulus and Remus?

Was he born of woman, this alleged De Sauty?
 Or a living product of galvanic action,
 Like the *acarus* bred in Crosse's flint-solution?
 Speak, thou Cyano-Rhinal!

BLUE-NOSE.

Many things thou askest, jackknife-bearing stranger,
 Much conjecturing mortal, pork-and-treacle-waster!
 Pretermit thy whittling, wheel thine ear-flap toward me,
 Thou shalt hear them answered.

When the charge galvanic tingled through the cable,
 At the polar focus of the wire electric
 Suddenly appeared a white-faced man among us:
 Called himself "DE SAUTY."

As the small opossum held in pouch maternal
 Grasps the nutrient organ whence the term *mammalia*,
 So the unknown stranger held the wire electric,
 Sucking in the current.

When the current strengthened, bloomed the pale-faced
 stranger,—
 Took no drink nor victual, yet grew fat and rosy,—
 And from time to time, in sharp articulation,
 Said, "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

From the lonely station passed the utterance, spreading
 Through the pines and hemlocks to the groves of steeples,
 Till the land was filled with loud reverberations
 Of "*All right!* DE SAUTY."

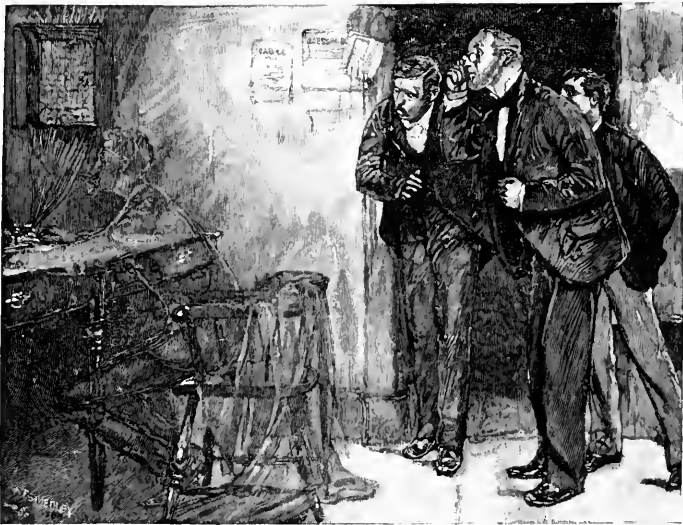
When the current slackened, drooped the mystic stranger,—
 Faded, faded, faded, as the stream grew weaker,—

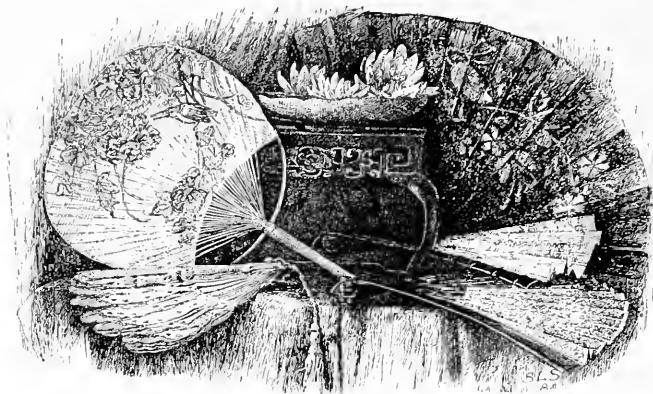
Wasted to a shadow, with a hartshorn odor
Of disintegration.

Drops of deliquescence glistened on his forehead,
Whitened round his feet the dust of efflorescence,
Till one Monday morning, when the flow suspended,
There was no De Sauty.

Nothing but a cloud of elements organic,
C. O. H. N. Ferrum, Chlor. Flu. Sil. Potassa,
Calc. Sod. Phosph. Mag. Sulphur, Mang.(?) Alumin.(?) Cu-
prum, (?)
Such as man is made of.

Born of stream galvanic, with it he had perished!
There is no De Sauty now there is no current!
Give us a new cable, then again we'll hear him
Cry, "*All right! DE SAUTY.*"





THE FIRST FAN.

READ AT A MEETING OF THE BOSTON BRIC-À-BRAC CLUB,
FEBRUARY 21, 1877.

WHEN rose the cry "Great Pan is dead!"
And Jove's high palace closed its portal,
The fallen gods, before they fled,
Sold out their frippery to a mortal.

"To whom?" you ask. I ask of you.
The answer hardly needs suggestion;
Of course it was the Wandering Jew,—
How could you put me such a question?

A purple robe, a little worn,
The Thunderer deigned himself to offer;
The bearded wanderer laughed in scorn,—
You know he always was a scoffer.

"Vile shillins! 't is a monstrous price;
Say two and six and further talk shun."
"Take it," cried Jove; "we can't be nice,—
'T would fetch twice that at Leonard's auction."

The ice was broken; up they came,
All sharp for bargains, god and goddess,
Each ready with the price to name
For robe or head-dress, scarf or bodice.

First Juno, out of temper, too,—
Her queenly forehead somewhat cloudy;
Then Pallas in her stockings blue,
Imposing, but a little dowdy.

The scowling queen of heaven unrolled
Before the Jew a threadbare turban:
“Three shillings.” “One. ’T will suit some old
Terrific feminine suburban.”

But as for Pallas,—how to tell
In seemly phrase a fact so shocking?
She pointed, —pray excuse me,—well,
She pointed to her azure stocking.

And if the honest truth were told,
Its heel confessed the need of darning;
“Gods!” low-bred Vulcan cried, “behold!
There! that’s what comes of too much larning!”

Pale Proserpine came groping round,
Her pupils dreadfully dilated
With too much living underground, —
A residence quite overrated;

“This kerchief’s what you want, I know, —
Don’t cheat poor Venus of her cestus, —
You’ll find it handy when you go
To — you know where; it’s pure asbestos.”

Then Phæbus of the silver bow,
And Hebe, dimpled as a baby,
And Dian with the breast of snow,
Chaser and chased — and caught, it may be:

One took the quiver from her back,
One held the cap he spent the night in,
And one a bit of *bric-à-brac*,
Such as the gods themselves delight in.

Then Mars, the foe of human kind,
Strode up and showed his suit of armor;
So none at last was left behind
Save Venus, the celestial charmer.

Poor Venus! What had she to sell?
For all she looked so fresh and jaunty,
Her wardrobe, as I blush to tell,
Already seemed but quite too scanty.



Her gems were sold, her sandals gone, —
She always would be rash and flighty, —
Her winter garments all in pawn,
Alas for charming Aphrodite!

The lady of a thousand loves,
The darling of the old religion,
Had only left of all the doves
That drew her car one fan-tailed pigeon.

How oft upon her finger-tips
He perched, afraid of Cupid's arrow,
Or kissed her on the rosebud lips,
Like Roman Lesbia's loving sparrow!

"My bird, I want your train," she cried;
"Come, don't let's have a fuss about it;
I'll make it beauty's pet and pride,
And you'll be better off without it.

"So vulgar! Have you noticed, pray,
An earthly belle or dashing bride walk,
And how her flounces track her way,
Like slimy serpents on the sidewalk?

"A lover's heart it quickly cools;
In mine it kindles up enough rage
To wring their necks. How can such fools
Ask men to vote for woman suffrage?"

The goddess spoke, and gently stripped
Her bird of every caudal feather;
A strand of gold-bright hair she clipped,
And bound the glossy plumes together,

And lo, the Fan! for beauty's hand,
 The lovely queen of beauty made it;
 The price she named was hard to stand,
 But Venus smiled: the Hebrew paid it.

Jove, Juno, Venus, where are you?
 Mars, Mercury, Phœbus, Neptune, Saturn?
 But o'er the world the Wandering Jew
 Has borne the Fan's celestial pattern.

So everywhere we find the Fan, —
 In lonely isles of the Pacific,
 In farthest China and Japan, —
 Wherever suns are sudorific.

Nay, even the oily Esquimaux
 In summer court its cooling breezes, —
 In fact, in every clime 't is so,
 No matter if it fries or freezes.

And since from Aphrodite's dove
 The pattern of the fan was given,
 No wonder that it breathes of love
 And wafts the perfumed gales of heaven!

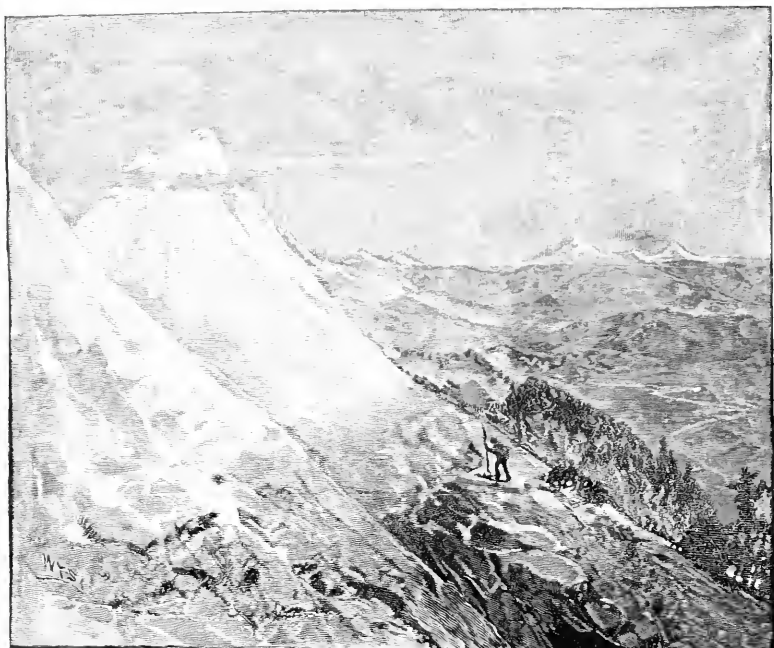
Before this new Pandora's gift
 In slavery woman's tyrant kept her,
 But now he kneels her glove to lift, —
 The fan is mightier than the sceptre.

The tap it gives how arch and sly!
 The breath it wakes how fresh and grateful!
 Behind its shield how soft the sigh!
 The whispered tale of shame how fateful!

Its empire shadows every throne
And every shore that man is tost on ;
It rules the lords of every zone,
Nay, even the bluest blood of Boston !

But every one that swings to-night,
Of fairest shape, from farthest region,
May trace its pedigree aright
To Aphrodite's fan-tailed pigeon.



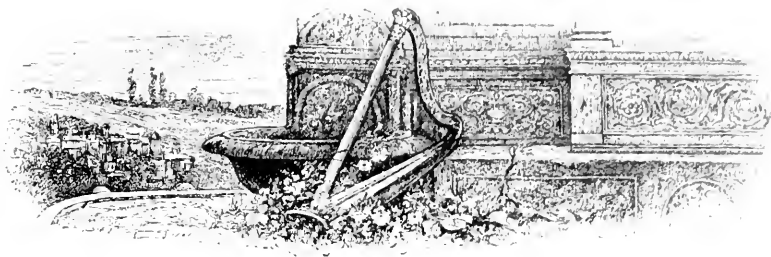


NEARING THE SNOW LINE.

SLOW toiling upward from the
misty vale,
I leave the bright enamelled
zones below ;

No more for me their beauteous bloom shall glow,
Their lingering sweetness load the morning gale ;
Few are the slender flowerets, scentless, pale,
That on their ice-clad stems all trembling blow
Along the margin of unmelting snow ;
Yet with unsaddened voice thy verge I hail,
White realm of peace above the flowering line ;
Welcome thy frozen domes, thy rocky spires !

O'er thee undimmed the moon-girt planets shine,
On thy majestic altars fade the fires
That filled the air with smoke of vain desires,
And all the unclouded blue of heaven is thine !



THE SILENT MELODY.

“BRING me my broken harp,” he said;
“We both are wrecks, — but as ye will, —
Though all its ringing tones have fled,
Their echoes linger round it still;
It had some golden strings, I know,
But that was long, — how long! — ago.

“I cannot see its tarnished gold,
I cannot hear its vanished tone,
Scarce can my trembling fingers hold
The pillared frame so long their own;
We both are wrecks, — a while ago
It had some silver strings, I know,

“But on them Time too long has played
The solemn strain that knows no change,
And where of old my fingers strayed
The chords they find are new and strange, —
Yes! iron strings, — I know, — I know, —
We both are wrecks of long ago.

“We both are wrecks. — a shattered pair, —
Strange to ourselves in time’s disguise . . .
What say ye to the lovesick air
That brought the tears from Marian’s eyes?
Ay! trust me, — under breasts of snow
Hearts could be melted long ago!

“Or will ye hear the storm-song’s crash
That from his dreams the soldier woke,
And bade him face the lightning flash
When battle’s cloud in thunder broke? . . .
Wrecks,—nought but wrecks!—the time was when
We two were worth a thousand men!”

And so the broken harp they bring
With pitying smiles that none could blame;
Alas! there’s not a single string
Of all that filled the tarnished frame!
But see! like children overjoyed,
His fingers rambling through the void!

“I clasp thee! Ay . . . mine ancient lyre . . .
Nay, guide my wandering fingers. . . . There!
They love to dally with the wire
As Isaac played with Esau’s hair. . . .
Hush! ye shall hear the famous tune
That Marian called the Breath of June!”



And so they softly gather round :

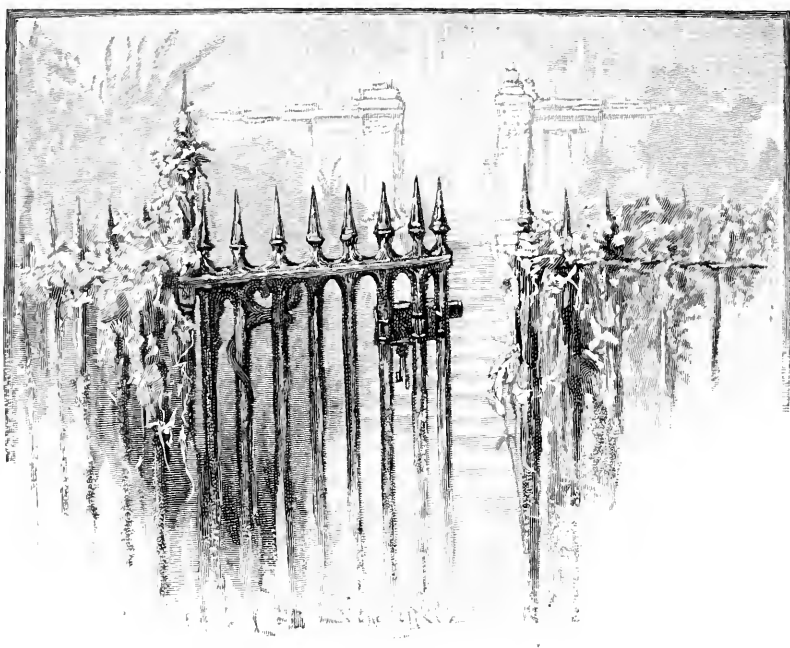
Rapt in his tuneful trance he seems :
His fingers move : but not a sound !

A silence like the song of dreams. . . .
“ There ! ye have heard the air,” he cries,
“ That brought the tears from Marian’s eyes !”

Ah, smile not at his fond conceit,
Nor deem his fancy wrought in vain ;
To him the unreal sounds are sweet, —
No discord mars the silent strain
Scored on life’s latest, starlit page —
The voiceless melody of age.

Sweet are the lips of all that sing,
When Nature’s music breathes unsought,
But never yet could voice or string
So truly shape our tenderest thought
As when by life’s decaying fire
Our fingers sweep the stringless lyre !





THE IRON GATE.

READ AT THE BREAKFAST GIVEN IN HONOR OF DR. HOLMES'S
SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY BY THE PUBLISHERS OF THE ATLANTIC
MONTHLY, BOSTON, DECEMBER 3, 1879.

WHERE is this patriarch you are kindly greeting?

Not unfamiliar to my ear his name,
Nor yet unknown to many a joyous meeting
In days long vanished,—is he still the same,

Or changed by years, forgotten and forgetting,
Dull-eared, dim-sighted, slow of speech and thought,
Still o'er the sad, degenerate present fretting,
Where all goes wrong, and nothing as it ought?

Old age, the graybeard! Well, indeed, I know him,—
Shrunk, tottering, bent, of aches and ills the prey;

In sermon, story, fable, picture, poem,
Oft have I met him from my earliest day :

In my old Æsop, toiling with his bundle, —
His load of sticks, — politely asking Death,
Who comes when called for, — would he lug or trundle
His fagot for him? — he was scant of breath.

And sad “Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,” —
Has he not stamped the image on my soul,
In that last chapter, where the worn-out Teacher
Sighs o’er the loosened cord, the broken bowl?

Yes, long, indeed, I’ve known him at a distance,
And now my lifted door-latch shows him here ;
I take his shrivelled hand without resistance,
And find him smiling as his step draws near.

What though of gilded baubles he bereaves us,
Dear to the heart of youth, to manhood’s prime ;
Think of the calm he brings, the wealth he leaves us,
The hoarded spoils, the legacies of time !

Altars once flaming, still with incense fragrant,
Passion’s uneasy nurslings rocked asleep,
Hope’s anchor faster, wild desire less vagrant,
Life’s flow less noisy, but the stream how deep !

Still as the silver cord gets worn and slender,
Its lightened task-work tugs with lessening strain,
Hands get more helpful, voices, grown more tender,
Soothe with their softened tones the slumberous brain.

Youth longs and manhood strives, but age remembers,
Sits by the raked-up ashes of the past,

Spreads its thin hands above the whitening embers
That warm its creeping life-blood till the last.

Dear to its heart is every loving token
That comes unbidden ere its pulse grows cold,
Ere the last lingering ties of life are broken,
Its labors ended and its story told.

Ah, while around us rosy youth rejoices,
For us the sorrow-laden breezes sigh,
And through the chorus of its jocund voices
Throbs the sharp note of misery's hopeless cry.

As on the gauzy wings of fancy flying
From some far orb I track our watery sphere,
Home of the struggling, suffering, doubting, dying,
The silvered globule seems a glistening tear.

But Nature lends her mirror of illusion
To win from saddening scenes our age-dimmed eyes,
And misty day-dreams blend in sweet confusion
The wintry landscape and the summer skies.

So when the iron portal shuts behind us,
And life forgets us in its noise and whirl,
Visions that shunned the glaring noonday find us,
And glimmering starlight shows the gates of pearl.

—I come not here your morning hour to sadden,
A limping pilgrim, leaning on his staff,—
I, who have never deemed it sin to gladden
This vale of sorrows with a wholesome laugh.

If word of mine another's gloom has brightened,
Through my dumb lips the heaven-sent message came;

If hand of mine another's task has lightened,
It felt the guidance that it dares not claim.

But, O my gentle sisters, O my brothers,
These thick-sown snow-flakes hint of toil's release ;
These feeble pulses bid me leave to others
The tasks once welcome ; evening asks for peace.

Time claims his tribute ; silence now is golden ;
Let me not vex the too long-suffering lyre ;
Though to your love untiring still beholden,
The curfew tells me — cover up the fire.

And now with grateful smile and accents cheerful,
And warmer heart than look or word can tell,
In simplest phrase — these traitorous eyes are tearful —
Thanks, Brothers, Sisters — Children — and farewell !



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